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ABSTRACT

The data in this study of the role and status of teacher aides were taken from six consolidated city school districts, 14 suburban central schools, and 36 rural central school districts in New York State. Questionnaires were received from 133 principals, 650 supervising teachers, and 407 teacher aides. The data did not disclose large differences according to the type of district. Teacher aides were assigned equally to experienced and inexperienced teachers, and slightly less than 75 percent served more than one teacher. Preparation was generally by inservice training, and there was little study of the larger aspects of education, although more than half the aides did some actual teaching. Most aides were middle-aged married mothers who were high school graduates, often with some higher education. Nearly 95 percent of the aides were paid, but most received no fringe benefits. Recruitment was usually through school personnel offices or by word-of-mouth. Aides often felt isolated and would welcome greater opportunities. The study includes detailed data, together with a full examination of teacher-aide activities. It concludes with an examination of some of the issues and conflicts, including the problems of what the real role of the teacher aide should be, whether more formal training should be provided, and development of the teacher-aide program during the next decade. (MBM)

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Role and Status of Teacher Aides in Selected New York State School Districts

Research and Investigation

Under the Direction of

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Background of Study

In 1968-69 two phases of a school paraprofessional study were completed at Cornell University. Phase one of this study was a general approach; all New York State school districts, with the exception of New York City and the common schools, were asked to supply information concerning the use of paraprofessionals, the types of service, qualifications, age, training, work hours, financial support, and general acceptance.¹ Of the 667 school districts included in this phase, 94.2 percent responded to questionnaires and, of this group, 94.7 percent reported the use of paraprofessionals. A total figure of 14,928 paraprofessionals was reported in service in the respondent schools. This figure included 10,154 paid and 4874 voluntary workers. Identified were 101 types of school paraprofessionals.

¹ The status of paraprofessionals in New York State school districts; Phase one of a continuing study, school paraprofessionals: Roles and job satisfactions. Univ. of State of New York, State Educ. Dept., Bur. Occupational Educ. Res. Albany, N. Y. Nov. 1969.

Since lunchroom helpers outnumbered other types of aides throughout the state, they were made the object of intensive study in 45 selected school districts. This second phase of the continuing study was concerned with lunchroom aide demography, working environment, job perceptions, employment procedures and practices, and perceived and preferred roles.²

During the year 1969-70, study of school paraprofessionals was continued. Concentration was centered on the second most numerous category, the teacher aide.

Teacher-Aide Definition

For the purpose of this study the following teacher-aide definitions were used:

- Works directly with a teacher(s) as a classroom assistant.
- Teaches, supervises, monitors, counsels with pupils but is under supervision of a teacher or teachers.
- Not included are persons whose duties are specialized or administrative such as theme readers, home visitors, audio-visual operators, classroom materials organizers, study hall supervisors, or playground supervisors.

School districts were advised of these definitions and participation in the research was requested where use of teacher aides was in agreement.

On May 9, 1969, the New York State legislature passed the following laws:

§3009.2.a. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the school authorities of any district shall have the power, in their discretion, to employ persons as teacher aides who shall assist the regular teacher or teachers of the district in the performance of their teaching functions by performing those non-teaching duties otherwise performed by such regular teacher or teachers.

² The status and role of lunchroom aides in selected New York State school districts. Univ. of State of New York, State Educ. Dept., Bur. Occupational Educ. Res. Albany, N. Y. June 1970.

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b. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the school authorities of any school district shall have the power, in their discretion, to employ persons as teaching assistants. Such persons, if so employed, shall be authorized to act only under the general supervision of a licensed or certified teacher.

These legislative definitions of teacher aide and teacher assistant were combined under the term "teacher aide" in this research. The investigators believed that this more general definition would serve the purpose of the study. Only two school districts withdrew from participation in the research because of conflict between legislation and the study teacher-aide definitions.

Procedure Used in Study

On the basis of data obtained from phase one of the continuing study, selected New York State school districts were invited by letter to participate in the teacher-aide investigation. The definitions of teacher aides to be used accompanied the invitations. The chief administrators of the school districts agreeing to participate were asked to forward lists of names and addresses of the building principals where teacher aides were engaged. The building principals were requested to list their teacher aides and supervising teachers.

On receipt of these lists each building principal was asked to complete two forms: a questionnaire reflecting administrative views about teacher-aide status and use, and an information sheet, general in terms of all teacher aides. The information sheet also requested copies of teacher-aide regulations and policy statements where such material was available. Individual questionnaires were also sent to the teacher aides and supervising teachers, a different form for each group. All four forms were forwarded in single packets to the building principals. Teacher aides and teachers were provided with envelopes and requested, for the purpose of confidentiality, to return the questionnaires, sealed, to the building principals. The building principals forwarded all the completed forms to the investigators in single large packets furnished for the purpose. The information sheets and questionnaires were made card-coded for computer analysis at facilities on the Cornell University campus.

Participants in the Study

The school districts invited to participate in this study were of three types: consolidated city school districts, suburban central school districts, and rural central-school districts. Central-school districts were judged to be suburban when they were located near to, or bordered

Table 1. *Respondents by type of school district*

Type of respondent	Central school (rural)		Central school (suburban)		Consolidated school		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Principals	58	43.1	48	36.1	27	20.3	133	100.0
Supervising teachers	262	40.3	273	42.0	115	17.7	650	100.0
Teacher aides	172	42.2	149	36.6	86	21.1	407	99.9

Table 2. *Respondents by school level*

Type of respondent	Elementary		Secondary		Elementary & secondary		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Principals	85	63.9	26	19.5	22*	16.5	133	99.9
Supervising teachers	525	80.8	119	18.3	6*	0.9	650	100.0
Teacher aides	297	72.9	93	22.8	17	4.1	407	99.8

* Seeming inconsistency between numbers of building principals and teachers in combined elementary- and secondary-school buildings is explained by fact that most teachers identify themselves as either elementary- or secondary-school teachers, whereas 22 school buildings were administered by one principal in charge of both elementary and secondary units.

on, large cities; otherwise, they were classified as primarily rural.

Of the 93 school districts contacted, 56 (60.2%) agreed to be participants. They included 6 consolidated city-school districts, 14 suburban central-school districts, and 36 rural central-school districts.

The geographical spread of these school districts extended from the northern part of New York State to Long Island and from the vicinity of Buffalo east to Albany. The investigators believe that the school districts included in the study are representative of the state.

The respondents who completed questionnaires in the study were: 133 building principals, 650 supervising teachers, and 407 teacher aides. Their locations by school district type and level are given in tables 1 and 2.

The data in table 1 indicate near similarity in ratios of teacher aides to supervising teachers in the 3 types of school districts; these ratios are all in a range of 1:1 to 1:2.

Table 2 shows that, when school districts are considered, total numbers of elementary supervisory teachers and teacher aides outnumber their confederates at the secondary level. At the same time, it is noted that the number of elementary schools exceeds the number of secondary schools. When a comparison is made in this light it is discovered that the proportion of supervising teachers and teacher aides in individual buildings is relatively the same at both elementary and secondary levels.

Supervising Teachers and Years of Experience

It might be expected that the supervising teachers selected to work with teacher aides would comprise the group with the largest number of years of teaching experience. Table 3 indicates a slight trend in this direction, particularly with teachers who have taught for more than 15 years. In general the number of teaching years does not seem to be a point of consideration, since there is a fairly even distribution in all categories of experience.

Table 3. *Supervising teachers: years of teaching experience*

Years of teaching experience	Number of teachers	Percentage of total
0-3	161	24.8
4-7	113	17.4
8-15	168	25.8
Over 15	185	28.5
No response	23	3.5
Total	650	100.0

Ratio of Supervising Teachers to Teacher Aides; Team Teaching

Tables 4 and 5 give the number of teacher aides per supervising teacher and supervising teachers per teacher aide. The data show that all sorts of combinations exist. Most (69.5%) of the teachers have only 1 aide. On the other hand, 40 percent of the teacher aides serve more than 3 supervising teachers, while 29 percent work with only 1 teacher. Although most school districts seem to prefer having one aide to each supervising teacher, the majority of aides are associated with two or more teachers.

In a program of team teaching, teacher aides usually work with all of the teachers in the team. Table 6 indicates that 159 supervising teachers (24.5%) and 62 teacher aides (15.2%) are engaged under these circumstances. This fact may help to explain the extensive reporting of teacher-aide responsibility to two or more supervising teachers.

Table 4. *Number of teacher aides supervised by teachers*

No. aides per supervising teacher	No. supervising teachers reporting	Percent
1	452	69.5
2	101	15.5
3	26	4.0
More than 3	16	2.5
No response	55	8.5
Total	650	100.0

Table 5. *Number of supervising teachers per teacher aide*

No. supervising teachers/aide	No. teacher aides reporting	Percent
1	118	29.0
2	63	15.5
3	41	10.1
More than 3	163	40.0
No response	22	5.4
Total	407	100.0

Employment Standards

Education

The high school diploma appears to be the standard educational requirement considered basic to employment

Table 6. *Team-teaching participation of supervising teacher and teacher aide*

Type of personnel	Participation in team teaching		No participation in team teaching		No response		Total
		Percent		Percent		Percent	
Supervising teacher	159	24.5	477	73.4	14	2.2	650
Teacher aide	62	15.2	319	78.4	26	6.4	407

as a teacher aide. This standard was required in the schools of 58 percent of the principals who reported. In largest numbers (45.9%), teacher aides have met this standard and agree (61.4%) that this should be the min-

Table 7. *Educational requirements for teacher aides*

Requirement	No. schools requiring	Percent
No requirements	33	25.2
High school diploma	76	58.0
Some college	17	13.0
College degree	2	1.5
No response	3	2.3
Total	131	100.0

Table 8. *Actual educational level of teacher aides*

Education completed	No. aides	Percent
Some high school	18	4.4
High school diploma	187	45.9
Some college	110	27.0
College degree	58	14.3
Other*	34	8.4
No response	0	0.0
Total	407	100.0

* Includes such education as business, nursing, beautician, airline hostess schools, and armed service institutes.

Table 9. *Education considered by teacher aides as necessary to perform job*

Education considered necessary	No. aides supporting educational level	Percent
8th grade or less	6	1.4
Some high school	23	5.7
High school diploma	250	61.4
Some college	87	21.4
College degree	17	4.2
Other	14	3.4
No response	10	2.5
Total	407	100.0

imum permitted for employment (tables 7, 8, and 9).

Even though about a quarter (25.2%) of the building principals reported that their schools had no established educational requirement, nevertheless very few teacher aides (4.4%) have less than a high school diploma. This fact suggests either that individuals with less than high school experience are not applying or that there is a real, although unwritten, preference for the better educated candidates. If such a preference does exist, the supply of teacher aides seems to be adequate at present, since 49.7 percent of the aides either have taken post high school work at nondegree institutions or attended college.

Age

The majority of schools (77.1%) do not establish teacher-aide age limitations. The probable reason for this is that aides have been used in most of the schools only recently. Sufficient evidence has not yet accumulated to decide on cut-off years or the degree to which age is a factor. School districts seem open-minded with respect to age and depend on other personal factors when making decisions about aide employment. The school principals were not asked to give specific age limitations, but to state whether minimum or maximum limitations were mandated in their schools. Among the school principals, 26 (19.8%) gave a school minimum age and only 3 (2.3%) a maximum age (table 10).

In actual practice, most teacher aides were in the 30- to 49-year bracket. For the most part they ranged from young adults to middle-aged persons. The extremes include: 13.0 percent between 20-29 years and 10.8 percent over 49. Only one teenager served as a teacher aide. It is evident that in the school districts studied, the teacher-aide positions are not generally filled with the very young or with older adults (table 11).

Table 10. *Teacher-aide age requirements*

Age requirements	No. schools	Percentage of total
Minimum age	26	19.8
Maximum age	3	2.3
No age requirement	101	77.1
No response	1	0.8

Table 11. *Actual age of teacher aides*

Age	Number	Percent
Under 20	1	0.2
20-29	53	13.0
30-39	168	41.3
40-49	141	34.6
Over 49	44	10.8
No response	0	0.0
Total	407	99.9

Sex

Some what more than half (60.3%) of the building principals cooperating in the study report that concerted effort is made to recruit both men and women as teacher aides in their schools. The door of opportunity is open to both sexes. It is presumed that in these schools the question of aide selection is dependent on personal characteristics, past experience, and other factors. However, more than a third (39.7%) of the schools, for reasons unknown, recruit women rather than men. It is noted that no school principal reported female exclusion from the ranks of teacher-aide employment (table 12). The cooperating school districts hire mostly women as teacher aides. Men are hired too, but their numbers comprise only about 2.4 percent of the total (table 13).

The reason for the predominance of women as teacher aides is presumably that more women apply for the position. Either men are not much interested or are engaged in other types of work. Many women, especially homemakers, seek employment in order to add to the family income. Others look at teacher-aide work as a means for filling their time with worthwhile activity. There is also the group of women, presently working in the schools in

Table 12. *School recruitment by sex*

Sex	Number	Percent
Male	0	0.0
Female	52	39.7
Either	79	60.3
Total	131	100.0

Table 13. *Sex of teacher aides employed*

Sex	Number	Percent
Male	10	2.4
Female	393	96.6
No response	4	1.0
Total	407	100.0

other capacities, who want to become teacher aides because they believe that the occupation gives greater personal satisfaction and a larger scope. In any case, the teacher-aide market is primarily for women, not men.

Prior Work Experience Required

School building principals were asked whether prior work experience was a factor in teacher-aide employment, although most schools do not have this requirement (table 14). About one-fifth (20.6%) of the principals reported affirmatively. Data in table 15 indicate the types of past work experiences reported by the teacher aides. Many have worked at various jobs; 80 (19.6%) have not worked before.

Although only 24 of the aides reporting in table 15 listed themselves as housewives or home managers, it is obvious that the number is much higher; many aides do not consider home management a work experience. Nevertheless, table 26 shows that most of the aides are married and are therefore assumed to have had experience in caring for a home and family.

Prior work activities of the teacher aides participating in this study are of many diverse forms. The largest group, office secretary, comprises 31.9 percent and includes individuals who have worked as stenographers, secretaries, office workers, and bookkeepers. This background is appropriate, since so many of the teacher aides handle matters that are clerical and detailed.

Teacher aides with sales experience as store managers, sales clerks, and cashiers are second in number (15.2%). As with office secretaries, these persons have had experiences with detail work, although they probably have had little secretarial work.

There is also evidence that the schools may successfully recruit from their own personnel resources. Data show that 35 (8.6%) of the teacher aides formerly worked in other school jobs; 12 teacher aides reported themselves as former teachers. Because of an extended separation from the classroom or difficulty in obtaining positions in their own certification areas, these former teachers have accepted, from their point of view, pro-tem positions as teacher aides. Most of these persons admit that they seek employment as teachers rather than aides, and show some resentment in not being permitted to teach full time.

Among the other more numerous former work experiences are those of factory worker (4.4%), telephone operator (3.6%) and nurse/medical assistant (3.1%). These categories also require a degree of responsibility, together with a large amount of detail and routine functions.

The diversity of teacher-aide backgrounds and the fact that most of the aides are on the job, presumably work-

Table 14. *Prior work experience required of teacher aides*

Requirement	No. schools requiring	Percent
Prior work experience required	27	20.6
None required	102	77.9
No response	2	1.5
Total	131	100.0

Table 15. *Former work of teacher aides*

Type of work	Number	Percent*
Office secretary	130	31.9
Sales	62	15.2
Other school work	35	8.6
Housewife, home manager	24	5.8
Factory worker	18	4.4
Telephone operator	15	3.6
Nurse, medical assistant	13	3.1
Former teacher	12	2.9
Communications (TV, etc.)	7	1.7
Waitress	5	1.2
House cleaning	2	0.4
Dressmaker/tailor	2	0.4
Artist, photographer	2	0.4
Bank clerk/teller	2	0.4
Beautician	2	0.4
Airline stewardess	1	0.2
Social worker	1	0.2
Choir director	1	0.2
Actuary	1	0.2
Chemist	1	0.2
Insurance agent	1	0.2
Farming	1	0.2
Armed services	1	0.2
Salvation army	1	0.2
No previous work	80	19.6
No response	25	6.1

* Based on 407 teacher aides reporting in the study.

ing successfully, supports a more general thesis—that the person herself, rather than her former job, determines whether she can perform as a teacher aide. This seems to be the standard first rule. That she has had certain work experiences is secondary, an important item, but not directive or exclusive in force.

Special Training Required

In most of the schools cooperating in this study (83.2%), no special teacher-aide training is required before employment (table 16). The schools are more dependent on forms of in-service training designed to orient

the aides toward their new jobs. On-the-job training characterized as individualistic is carried on in 108 (82.4%) of the schools and group in-service training by 51 (38.9%). Some of the schools use both forms of orientation (table 17). There seems to be strong support for the belief that teacher aides do not necessarily need prior special training to assume their roles, or that whatever special training is needed may be given concurrently with service.

Opportunity is available for a small number (5.3%) of ambitious teacher aides to pursue higher education in order to obtain more information about their jobs or to take courses leading to a degree or teacher certification. The school principals report that no pressure is put on the aides; participation depends on individual interest in the opportunities offered.

Other variations in special training provided by the schools include: participation in federal, state, or private programs established by instructional centers, boards of cooperative educational services, and Title I and III centers supported by ESEA grants.

Less than half (40.5%) of the teacher aides report having had special training after employment (table 18). Of this group, almost two-thirds (64.6%) of the teacher aides stated that the training was school-sponsored, and a quarter (25.4%) indicated that it was obtained under other auspices.

The major portion of teacher aides believed that the time necessary to learn the job ranged from one week (34.2%) to one month (27.5%) (table 19). If this is

Table 16. *Special training required by schools before employment*

Special training	No. schools	Percent
Required	22	16.8
Not required	109	83.2
No response	0	0.0
Total	131	100.0

Table 17. *Special training provided by schools after employment*

Special training	Yes	Percent*	No	Percent
On-the-job training	108	82.4	23	17.6
Group in-service training	51	38.9	80	61.1
Concurrent higher education enrollment	7	5.3	124	94.7
Require other special training	7	5.3	124	94.7
No special training	19	14.5	112	85.5

* Percentages based on reports of 131 principals.

Table 18. *Teacher-aide report of special training provided after employment*

Had special training after employment	Number	Percent [*]	School provided training						Total
			Yes	Percent [†]	No	Percent [†]	No response	Percent [†]	
Yes	165	40.5	107	64.6	42	25.4	16	9.9	165
No	235	57.7	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
No response	7	1.7	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	407	99.9	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

^{*} Percentage based on number of teacher aides.

[†] Percentage based on 165 teacher aides reporting special training after employment.

Table 19. *Time taken to learn job: teacher-aide view*

Time	Number	Percent
About 1 day	30	7.4
About 1 week	139	34.2
About 1 month	112	27.5
Several months	71	17.4
About 1 year	20	4.9
About 2 years	7	1.7
Over 2 years	3	0.7
No response	25	6.1
Total	407	100.0

Table 20. *Teacher-aide perception of need for additional training*

Need for additional training	Number	Percent
Needed	105	25.8
Not needed	287	70.5
No response	15	3.7
Total	407	100.0

true, the job requirements relegated to teacher aides were sufficiently simple and detailed to be learned quickly. But learning the job and performing it well are two different matters. The aides may be reporting only their concept of the job rather than a desirable performance.

Teacher aides generally feel that they do not need further training (table 20). This raises questions concerning the type of work actually done and the aides' understanding of education as a whole.

Paid versus Voluntary

Nearly all of the schools studied (92.3%) used only paid teacher aides; no schools depended on volunteers alone. In 6.9 percent of the schools, both paid and volunteer teacher aides were reported (table 23). In actual numbers, paid teacher aides far exceed those who work voluntarily (table 24).

Although school districts differ in philosophy and organization, reasons for the preponderance of paid aides are: school boards prefer them, administrators and teachers feel that paid employment produces greater compliance in carrying out duties; the view that service in the

Table 21. *Preparedness of teacher aides as viewed by principals and teachers*

Respondent	Very well prepared		Adequately prepared		Poorly prepared		No answer		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Principal	46	34.6	78	58.6	6	4.5	3	2.3	133	100.0
Teacher	235	36.2	353	54.3	50	7.7	12	1.8	650	100.0

Table 22. *Need for teacher-aide certification as viewed by teachers and teacher aides*

Respondent	Yes	Percent	No	Percent	No response	Percent	Total
Teacher	248	38.2	378	58.2	24	3.7	650
Teacher aide	162	39.8	210	51.6	35	8.6	407

Table 23. *Types of teacher aides serving the schools*

Type of teacher aide	No. school buildings*	Percent
Paid	121	92.3
Voluntary	0	0.0
Both paid and voluntary . . .	9	6.9
No response	1	0.8

* Based on reports of 131 principals. Data from 2 reports could not be interpreted.

Table 24. *Number of paid and voluntary teacher aides serving the schools*

Type of teacher aide	Number	Percent
Paid	386	94.8
Voluntary	16	3.9
No response	5	1.2
Total	407	99.9

schools should always be recompensed; voluntary assistance has not been available; voluntary assistance has not been sought; and voluntary teacher aides may not be engaged in extensive daily use in the schools and their appearance in school is at their option and not at the school's.

Means of Publicizing Positions

Data from the study indicate that the most used means for disseminating and gaining information about teacher-aide job opportunities is the school personnel office. Most of the schools (81.7%) and nearly half of the aides (44.5%) made use of this facility (table 25). Many school principals use the word-of-mouth system and disclose teacher-aide needs to fellow workers in the schools, to

parents, and to groups and persons in the community, believing (as the results show) that the news will spread. Many schools advertise through newspapers, radio, and television, but the results are not as favorable as the means previously mentioned. Only a small fraction of schools use outside employment services, and it is evident that few aides are obtained as a result; this is not to disparage these services, only to point out the minimal use that both parties—schools and prospective teacher aides—make of them.

Both principals and teacher aides also report using other means for advertising and informing themselves about teacher-aide positions. These are:

<i>Other means used by teacher aides to obtain positions</i>	<i>No. of teacher aides reporting</i>
1. Hired after serving as volunteer	8
2. Answered notice sent home with pupils	5
3. Asked to apply while working in school in another capacity	5
4. Heard P. T. A. announcement . . .	4
5. Informed through a family neighborhood center	1
6. Qualified by civil service examination	1
<i>Others means used by schools to advertise positions</i>	<i>No. of schools reporting</i>
1. Information posted in district newsletters and schools bulletins .	6
2. Flyers sent home with pupils . . .	3
3. Announcements at P. T. A. meetings	2
4. Information given to Title I and federal aid offices	2
5. Contact with volunteers in school	1
6. Survey of pupils' mothers	1
7. Notices posted on school bulletin boards	1
8. Information for Board of Cooperative Education Services	1

Table 25. *Means of reporting and obtaining teacher-aide positions*

Means	Use by school		Use by teacher aide	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Newspaper ads	48	36.6	28	6.9
School personnel office	107	81.7	181	44.5
U. S. and state employment service	6	4.6	5	1.2
Private employment services	2	1.5	0	0.0
Radio and TV	2	1.5	0	0.0
Through a union	0	0.0	1	0.2
Through a relative or friend	--	--	21	5.2
Through a school employee	--	--	112	27.5
Other	39	29.8	40	9.8
No response	1	0.8	19	4.7

It is obvious that many means may and have been used. Each community is unique, and the process used varies according to the characteristics of the community and the school. What works well in one school may be unsuccessful elsewhere. In general, many means should be applied to attract greater numbers of candidates for positions and to increase the possibility to make selections.

Teacher Aide Demography

Marital Status

Nearly all (90.9%) of the teacher aides are married (table 26). This group of aides, constituting by far the largest portion of those included in the study, are for the most part between the ages of 30 and 50 (table 11). Several reasons may be suggested for this situation. Many school officials make special efforts to recruit married women, who presumably are especially understanding of children, since they are either raising or have raised their own offspring. There is also a cadre of young to middle-

Table 26. *Marital status of teacher aides*

Status	Number	Percent
Single	21	5.1
Married	370	90.9
Widowed	10	2.5
Divorced or separated	6	1.5
No response	0	0.0
Total	407	100.0

aged women, some of whom want to add to the family income, and others who, having ample free time because their children are grown, want to engage in a useful occupation.

Only a few unmarried individuals serve as aides, and even fewer are divorced or separated. Why this is true is conjectural, but we can report that there seems to be an abundance of qualified married persons available whom school officials consider to be stable, reliable individuals with a capacity for understanding and dealing with children.

Number of Children

Teacher aides reported the number of children in their families as ranging from none to a maximum of 10. The largest group had 2 children and accounted for 34.7 percent of the aides; the second largest group, with 3 children, constituted 26.4 percent of the total. The median number of children was 3 (table 27).

The question often arises whether a teacher aide is not too much involved in parental responsibility to function well in school. In consequence, the question was asked whether the aides had children under 6 years of age who were not in school. It is assumed that responsibility for these children must take precedence over the tasks the aide performs in school. Of the teachers included in the study, most (69.7%) had no children under 6 years old who were not in school. Only 25 aides had one such child and 2 aides had 2 such children (table 27). It is evident that most of the teacher aides either had no children under school age, or had no supervisory problem during working hours for children of school age. Beyond that point the children were old enough to take care of themselves. The few aides who had children under school age

Table 27. *Size of family and number of children under 6 and not in school*

No. children in family	Number of teacher aides	Percent*	No. children under 6, not in school	Number of teacher aides	Percent*
None	20	5.2	None	269	69.7
1	37	9.6	1	25	6.5
2	134	34.7	2	2	0.5
3	102	26.4	3	--	--
4	54	14.0	4	--	--
5	26	6.8	5	--	--
6	8	2.0	6	--	--
7	3	0.8	7	--	--
8	0	0.0	8	--	--
9	1	0.3	9	--	--
10	1	0.3	10	--	--
Not applicable†	21	--	Not applicable†	21	--
No response	0	0.0	No response	90	23.3

* Percentage based on 386 teacher aides who were married, widowed, divorced, or separated.

† Unmarried teacher aides.

were apparently able to find other persons, perhaps from the immediate family, who supervised the children during working hours.

Length of Time in Present Position

Most of the school districts have used teacher aides for only the past 4 years.³ Consequently, many of the aides have limited experience. Data in this study show that 36.8 percent of the aides were serving their first year, but only a few less (34.9%) have been on the job for 3 or more years (table 28). Under these circumstances, retention of teacher aides appears to be high and turn-over rather small. As the programs have been developed, increasing numbers of teacher aides have been added to school staffs. We feel that the numbers of new teacher aides being hired and experienced ones being retained indicate growing programs. The schools are obviously finding the teacher-aide programs worth continuing and strengthening.

Means and Time to Arrive at Work

Of interest in considering the daily life of the teacher aide are the means and time taken to travel to school. Almost three-quarters (73.5%) of the aides reporting in the study drive their own cars and nearly all (92.4%) take less than 15 minutes for travel. Only 7.6 percent of the teacher aides take as much as a half-hour to go from home to school, and no aides exceed this time (tables 29 and 30). The data indicate that nearly all of the aides live only a short distance from school and that travel and time present no significant difficulty.

Funding, Benefits, and Salaries

The chief sources of funds supporting the use of teacher aides are regular school budgets (78.6%) and governmental support (55%). Some school districts use several forms of support, and 21.4 percent of the schools depend on sources other than the regular school budget. In the latter case, teacher aides are employed on a temporary basis, with the hope that once their usefulness is established, they will be maintained through the regular school budget (table 31).

We did not expect to find that governmental support for this program is available through federal and state sources in as many as 55 percent of the school districts. This indicates great interest in the use of paraprofessionals in the public schools.

³ The status of paraprofessionals in New York State school districts, pp. 11-12. Bur. Occupational Educ. Res., State Educ. Dept. Albany, New York. Nov. 1969.

Table 28. *Teacher aides: length of time in present position*

Years	Number of teacher aides	Percent
1st year	150	36.8
2nd year	115	28.3
3 or more years	142	34.9
Total	407	100.0

Table 29. *Means of transportation*

Means of travel	Number of teacher aides	Percent
Drive own car	299	73.5
Walk	54	13.3
Public transportation	2	0.5
Ride with others	39	9.6
Drive own car and walk	7	1.7
No response	6	1.5
Total	407	100.1

Table 30. *Time taken for travel to work*

Time	Number of teacher aides	Percent
Less than 15 minutes	376	92.4
One half hour	31	7.6
One hour	0	0.0
No response	0	0.0
Total	407	100.0

Grants from private foundations are found in two cases and, although applied to 1.5 percent of the schools, they must be recognized as additional indications of interest in the teacher-aide movement. Not many private foundation grants are given and are generally restricted to a few institutions.

Under "Other sources," only one form of financial support was reported that could be considered as different from the other three categories. This was described as a fund provided by a board of cooperative educational services. The nature of the support was not disclosed.

In the matter of salaries, more than half (55.8%) of the teacher aides had monthly take-home pay of between \$100 and \$199, with a median of \$167.72. At the two extremes, only 3 of the aides had take-home pay of between \$1 and \$49 per month, while 25 received \$300 per month. In the former case, the 3 aides worked for only a few hours per week. The higher salaries were paid for full-time employment, where experience, expertise, and

longevity on the job were especially recognized (table 32).

Fringe benefits are not generally permitted teacher aides and, when provided, vary considerably from school to school. The benefit most frequently given is sick leave with pay (40.3%) (table 33). Second, is retirement benefit (not social security) (20.1%). We conclude that either the school districts do not yet consider an overall program of fringe benefits for the aides or they consider teacher aides to be too transitory. With increased use of paid teacher aides, school districts will undoubtedly need to introduce more substantial fringe benefits into their school budgets for this type of personnel.

The only other fringe benefit mentioned in addition to those stated on the questionnaires was in the form of credit union benefit offered by two schools.

Table 31. *Source of funds supporting teacher aides*

Source of funds	Schools using		Schools not using	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Regular school budget	103	78.6	28	21.4
Governmental support	72	55.0	59	45.0
Foundation grant	2	1.5	129	98.5
Other	1	0.8	130	99.2

Table 32. *Teacher-aide average monthly take-home pay*

Amount in dollars	Number of teacher aides	Percent
1-49	3	0.7
50-99	55	13.5
100-199	227	55.8
200-299	76	18.7
Over 300	25	6.1
Not paid	16	3.9
No response	5	1.2
Total	407	99.9

Table 33. *Teacher-aide fringe benefits*

Fringe benefits	Teacher aides receiving	
	Number	Percent
Meals	11	2.7
Sick leave with pay	164	40.3
Vacation with pay	47	11.5
Health insurance	64	15.7
Retirement*	82	20.1
Life insurance	24	5.9
Other	14	3.4

* Not Social Security

Work Periods of Teacher Aides

With very few exceptions, teacher aides worked on a regular schedule either full-time (47.7%) or part-time (49.6%). Only 10 aides reported that they worked when requested to meet an immediate need. The standard procedure used by most schools is to indicate the times when teacher aides should be present and to maintain these schedules closely (table 34).

Teacher aides reported a number of different schedules, but the primary arrangement was for daily appearances (85%). Other schedules included alternate days, several consecutive days, and one day a week. These variations affected only a small portion of the total number of the aides (8.5%) (table 35).

Almost half (48.2%) of the teacher aides stated that they were in school for a full day, or a work period of 6 to 8 hours. This fact is somewhat at odds with the full-time data as mentioned above and perhaps can be accounted for by respondent misinterpretation, occasional full-day work by aides not regularly employed, or by lack of response to certain items on the questionnaire (table 36). Part-time work involving a small percentage of the aides included mornings only (13.8%), afternoons only (3.9%) and midday only (1.2%). Also, 26.5 percent of the teacher aides served under other schedules; these arrangements were not described.

The greatest number of teacher aides (89.9%) worked between 11 and 40 hours a week. The data show that 3 different schedules each applied to about the same percentage of aides: 29 percent of the aides worked between 11 and 20 hours a week, 32.4 percent between 21 to 30 hours, and 28.5 percent between 31-40 hours (table 37).

Very few (7.4%) of the teacher aides worked additionally, outside of school. The great majority expended all their efforts in teacher-aide services (table 38).

The data show that about half of the teacher aides work every day for a full day and therefore during all the hours the schools are in session. The others generally work on regular schedules that appear to be adapted to part-time arrangements and are probably determined by aide availability and school need.

Table 34. *Proportion of daily time spent on job*

Time expended	Number of teacher aides	Percent
Full time	194	47.7
Regular part-time	202	49.6
As needed by school	10	2.5
No response	1	0.2
Total	407	100.0

Table 35. *Days worked and typical work week*

Days worked	Number of teacher aides	Percent
Daily	346	85.0
Regular but alternate days per week	14	3.4
Two consecutive days	2	0.5
One day per week	7	1.7
Other	12	2.9
Not applicable	9	2.2
No response	17	4.2
Total	407	99.9

Table 36. *Period of day worked*

Period	Number of teacher aides	Percent
Full day		
6-8 hours	196	48.2
A. M. only	56	13.8
P. M. only	16	3.9
Midday only	5	1.2
Other	108	26.5
Not applicable	9	2.2
No response	17	4.2
Total	407	100.0

Job Policy and Description

Only 26 percent of the schools included in this study have job policy statements to guide the employment and use of teacher aides. As a result of absence of policy, large numbers of teacher aides are completely dependent on direction by principals and teachers, with occasional help from written descriptions of their particular jobs. Most of the teacher aides rely almost entirely on the information and guidance given to them by their superiors and depend little on written description. Only 37.8 percent of the aides report having received a written list of duties. Without doubt this practice infers continual assessment of the aides' ability to perform, duty schedules being adjusted accordingly. If this is the general practice, it works well according to the teacher aides. Nearly all (97.5%) of them feel that they know what to do.

Most of the aides (93.1%) responded that they were told what to do, and slightly more than half (52.8%) what not to do. Consequently we believe that the rest of the teacher aides must have determined the limits of their activities through common sense and trial, or may still be operating in areas where there is some question. In

Table 37. *Number of hours worked per week*

Hours per week	Number of teacher aides	Percent
5 or less	17	4.2
6-10	18	4.4
11-20	118	29.0
21-30	132	32.4
31-40	116	28.5
Other	4	1.0
No response	2	0.5
Total	407	100.0

Table 38. *Incidence of work outside of school*

Do you have another job outside of school?	Number of teacher aides	Percent
Yes	30	7.4
No	372	91.4
No response	5	1.2
Total	407	100.0

any case, since previous testimony indicates that principals and teachers are generally satisfied with the aides' job performance, the aides cannot be doing much that could be considered inappropriate.

The viewpoints of teachers and teacher aides were similar in respect to the teacher-aide job definition. More than half (61.4%) of the teachers felt that there was adequate definition in their schools. This we must suppose to be in an unwritten form, but generally in agreement (table 40). Most of the teacher aides (88.7%) believed that teachers knew the elements that make up the position. Also, in terms of job perception, 89.4 percent of the teacher aides felt that they were doing what they expected they would do when they were first hired.

However, even though only 17.6 percent of the teachers believed that descriptions of teacher-aide jobs were inadequate, and only 8.4 percent of the teacher aides felt that teachers did not understand teacher-aide roles, there is enough misunderstanding and lack of knowledge to constitute a problem that should be corrected. Even a small percentage of misunderstanding can lead to difficulties. School officials should make every effort to open the door for better communications between teachers and teacher aides and try to develop clear policy statements.

Titles of the Position

Under the definition established, "teacher aide" is the most common title used for persons engaged in the

Table 39. Means of informing teacher aides of their duties

Means	As viewed by principals		As viewed by teachers	
	Number ^o	Percent	Number ^o	Percent
Written description	51	38.3	223	34.3
Told by teacher	109	82.0	530	81.5
Told by principal	106	79.7	397	61.1
Other means [†]	2	1.5	88	13.5
No information given	0	0.0	12	1.8

^o Some respondents indicated more than one means used.

[†] Other means reported were: told by department head, told by supervisor, group orientation meetings, in-service training, magazine articles and other printed matter, told by team teaching leader, told by business manager, helped by other aides, agreement with other aides, observation, feedback, demonstration, told by administrative assistant, told by office secretary, weekly schedule of assignments.

Table 40. How well the job of teacher aide is defined (teachers' viewpoint)

How well defined	Number of teachers	Percent
Excellent	118	18.2
Adequately	399	61.4
Poorly	114	17.6
No response	19	2.9
Total	650	100.1

schools included in this study. Unfortunately, some individuals not directly connected with the classroom were reported by the principals under this title. For example, 11.1 percent of the individuals responding were classified "teacher aides," but titled "library aides" in the respective schools; obviously, many of them were not engaged in classroom work. Certain library work done in connection with classroom activities is allowable as part of a teacher aide's work; however, many aides do library work only and should therefore have been classified as library aides (table 41). This situation adds to the general feeling that confusion still exists in relation to titles

Table 41. Title of teacher aide

Title	Number of teacher aides	Percent
Teacher aide	272	66.8
Teacher assistant	50	12.3
Library aide	45	11.1
Monitor	9	2.2
Clerk	4	1.0
Auxiliary personnel	1	0.2
Audio-visual aide	4	1.0
Volunteer tutor	13	3.2
Other	8	2.0
No response	1	0.2
Total	407	100.0

and duties of auxiliary personnel.

Perhaps part of the difficulty is in the definition of "teacher", a word often used to include all types of professional staff who work in the schools. By this definition, a librarian is a teacher and the person helping her becomes a teacher aide. Another reason for including so many types of auxiliaries under the title of teacher aide might be the attitude that any job classification even re-

Table 42. Work being done in school in addition to job as teacher aide

Type of work	Yes	Percent	No	Percent	No response	Percent	Total
Audio-visual aide	58	25.9	160	71.4	6	2.7	224
Playground aide	88	39.3	130	58.0	6	2.7	224
Lunchroom aide	112	50.0	106	47.3	6	2.7	224
Library aide	62	27.7	156	69.6	6	2.7	224
Transportation aide	25	11.2	193	86.1	6	2.7	224
Other ^o	68	30.3	148	66.1	8	3.6	224

^o These duties conceived by this many teacher aides as not within limits of their job: office secretary (12), guidance office assistance (3), attendance clerk (3), nurse's office assistance (2), study hall supervision (2), bus driver (2), noon hour office duty (1), supervision of study center (1), duplicator for many teachers (1), hall duty (1), pep session advisor (1), switch board operator (1), receptionist (main office) (1), special class (slow learners) (1), advisor (Future Nurses Club) (1), chaperone school activities (1), wrestling assistance (1), first aid (1).

motely connected with a teacher's job demands a teacher-aide title; with this view, monitors of hallways, study halls, and playgrounds, by reason of relieving teachers from specific duties, become teacher aides.

An examination of table 42 discloses that many teacher aides consider that they are doing the work of other types of auxiliary personnel. For one example, 50 percent of the teacher aides are involved in lunchroom duties and classify themselves in part as "lunchroom aides". The degree to which they are in reality lunchroom aides in addition to being teacher aides is in question. A few of these persons may perform mostly lunchroom duties, but it is presumed that most have only limited responsibilities and may, for example, supervise a small group of children while they are eating. There is no reason why many of these aides could not serve in several auxiliary capacities, but it must be recognized that their attention to each extra endeavor further stifles the initiative that they might provide as aides to teachers.

Importance Attached to Position

Each group—principals, teachers and teacher aides—was asked questions concerning the support and appreciation that they believed was given to teacher aides by various segments of the school community (table 43). In general, the responses were favorable; the position of teacher aide is supported by the majority of professional staff, pupils, and parents.

All three groups agree that the teacher-aide position is important and helpful to the supervising teachers. This is perhaps the most significant consideration because the prime reason for the existence of the position is as an aide to the teacher. The fact that all three groups do agree on the strong relationship of teacher aide to supervising teacher fortifies the function of the position as it was originally labeled and established.

Both principals (93.2%) and teachers (84.3%) believe that the teacher-aide position is directly important for the pu-

pils, although teachers are somewhat less certain than principals, with 72 of the 650 teachers replying negatively and 30 teachers not responding. At least 75 percent of each group feel that the pupils themselves support teacher-aide work. However, this percentage is somewhat lower than the teacher and principal estimations of the value of this work for the pupils. A substantial number of respondents in each group chose not to answer the question, perhaps indicating doubt or indecision. There is evidence that pupil receptivity is in doubt in some schools. Why this is so is not known.

By majority opinion, the three groups feel that teacher aides are endorsed by parents. The principals are reasonably certain of this (83.5%) but teachers (67.1%) and teacher aides (65.8%) display less certainty. This lack of agreement is compounded by the sizable number of teachers and teacher aides who chose not to answer the question. The probable explanations for the situation are that either teachers and teacher aides do not know the amount of parental support, that they are in fact in error, or that the principals are misconstruing parental backing, at least of a minority of parents. It is suggested that each school district could help to alleviate the situation through public communication and convention and permit parents greater opportunity to understand teacher-aide use. There is enough doubt evidenced in the study data to suggest that all the concerned public is not fully appreciative of the role and importance of teacher aides.

Teacher-Aide Performance and Job Satisfaction

Most principals and supervising teachers reported that teacher aides carry out their duties in an excellent manner (table 44). Principals (66.9%) gave a higher rating than teachers (51.8%) did. At the other end of the scale, none of the principals and only 2.6 percent of the teachers rated the aide as performing poorly. The evidence

Table 43. *Importance of teacher-aide work*

Item	Principals		Teachers		Teacher aides	
	Number agreeing	Percent	Number agreeing	Percent	Number agreeing	Percent
Teacher-aide work is important to pupils	124	93.2	548	84.3	395	97.1
Teacher-aide work is important to supervising teachers . .	130	97.7	601	92.5	387	95.1
Pupils support teacher-aide work	111	83.5	499	76.8	336	82.6
Parents support teacher-aide work	111	83.5	436	67.1	268	65.8

Table 44. *Job performance of teacher aides*

Rating	Principals		Teachers	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Excellent	89	66.9	337	51.8
Satisfactory	42	31.6	277	42.6
Poor	0	0.0	17	2.6
No response	2	1.5	19	2.9
Total	133	100.0	650	99.9

supports a strong appreciation of teacher-aide work by their superiors, and secondarily, implies high regard for their presence as active participants in the school instructional program.

In contrast with an apparent ability to discern general teacher-aide performance as reported above, the teachers were less able to pinpoint specifics that supported their judgment (table 48). In other words, the supervising teachers were able to say that the aides were doing a good job but were not able to define their reasons. It is a case of being happily satisfied without knowing why. The trouble is probably the lack of clear-cut and definitive role concepts; teachers do not know the fine points of teacher-aide performance. They may appear later, when experience and experiment develop understanding and acceptance. At this point, teacher-aide evaluation does not seem to be possible except in general terms.

Most teacher aides believe they know how their job performances are evaluated (table 48). Only 6.9 percent of the aides claimed a poor understanding, while 7.1 percent of the aides did not respond. It is probable that the aides sensed their acceptance or rejection in general rather than specific terms. Since their duties were seldom spelled out in writing and most often on a one-to-one oral basis, there is doubt whether the aides could sense their success in anything other than overall performance.

When the teacher aides were asked to state how satisfied they were with their jobs, 56.8 percent of the aides

responded "very satisfied" and 39.3 percent "satisfied" (table 45). Aides were well satisfied with their supervisory personnel. This is also true for the work they did and the pupils with whom they associated. On the other hand, considerable dissatisfaction was expressed about their pay and the availability of promotions.

We sense that many teacher aides feel restricted in their school services and that many could handle increased responsibility. Of course, this is a question to be answered only by careful study of each case, since some aides aspire to a level of activity higher than their limited ability and knowledge merit. On the other hand, satisfaction with working conditions is often premised on the amount of freedom for experimentation given to the worker. Each individual teacher aide ought to have the cooperation of her superiors, with sympathy for her aspirations, and be given some opportunity to be involved in new ventures. Whether this procedure leads to promotion and increased salary is another matter and must be examined within the structure of individual school policy and procedures.

We include here a selected list of other types of work that teacher aides indicated they would like to do.

Item	Number of teacher aides desiring
1. Teach	17
2. Work more directly with children . . .	16
3. Do substitute teaching	14
4. Work with individual children	13
5. Do clerical work	11
6. Work with slow learners	9
7. Assist in reading	6
8. Do secretarial work	5
9. Already certified and would like to teach	5
10. Accept more responsibilities	4
11. Assist in audio-visual work	4
12. Assist in library duties	3
13. Become a teacher assistant	3

Table 45. *Teacher-aide satisfaction with position conditions*

Condition	Very satisfied		Satisfied		Dissatisfied		No response	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1. Other personnel	324	79.6	75	18.4	1	0.2	7	1.7
2. Supervision received	284	69.8	112	27.5	6	1.5	5	1.2
3. Work done	256	62.9	134	32.9	9	2.2	8	2.0
4. Pupils	243	59.7	142	34.9	6	1.5	16	3.9
5. Promotions available	47	11.5	142	34.9	122	30.0	96	23.6
6. Pay received	63	15.5	181	44.5	138	33.9	25	6.1
7. Cumulative (1-6 above) (mean)	203	49.9	131	32.1	47	11.5	26	6.4

Several implications for more responsible work appear here. Behind them is the question of what the teacher aide means by "responsible work". One implication is that many teacher aides want to work more closely with children—an activity that is probably being denied. Another involves increased classroom participation. A third implication concerns the desire of many aides to be more generally active and involved. At present they feel inactive, disengaged, and out of the picture.

To help solve these problems of increased involvement and greater responsibilities, principals and supervising teachers should take extensive pains to determine the nature of the aides' interests and future hopes. The doors of opportunity should be opened to the aides whenever conditions are fortuitous, actually exist or can be planned, and involve only reasonable risk.

Although teacher aides have minor dissatisfactions with their jobs, most of them show a readiness to remain where they are (table 47). Retention, as related to their future plans, is high; few intend to leave the schools for other positions. Although responses to "other plans" were few, each individual was intending either to take part-time college work or withdraw as a teacher aide in order to pursue full-time study toward a college degree.

Table 46. *Teacher-aide view of increased job responsibility*

Viewpoint	Number of teacher aides	Percent
Could do more responsible work	193	47.4
Could not do more responsible work	179	44.0
No response	35	8.6
Total	407	100.0

Table 47. *Teacher-aide future job plans*

Plan	Number of teacher aides	Percent
Remain at same job	293	72.0
Have different job with same employer	25	6.1
Move to another employer in same community	4	1.0
Move to another employer in different community	12	2.9
Move to same employer in different community	0	0.0
Be retired	9	2.2
Other	45	11.1
No response	19	4.7
Total	407	100.0

Acceptance of Teacher Aides

Five questions were asked of principals, teachers, and teacher aides in the participating schools to determine, to some degree, the acceptance of teacher aides as fellow workers. These questions involved activities permitted the aides where association with teachers was necessary (table 49).

In most schools, teachers are assigned a room commonly called a teachers' lounge, where they may relax, apart from pupil contact, and enjoy the company of other teachers for brief or extended periods. More than 90 percent of the three groups reported that teacher aides were invited to use these lounges.

In response to the question concerning teacher-aide attendance at faculty meetings, there was a difference of opinion. Of the principals, 61.7 percent stated that aides may attend, whereas 56.6 percent of the teachers and 64.1 percent of the teacher aides claimed that aides should not attend faculty meetings. The directive efforts and views of the principals on participation do not seem to have been communicated to the teachers and aides. In addition, since so many aides felt the doors closed to them in this respect, we suspect that many teachers have assumed the responsibility of telling the aides not to attend. We also feel that an important proportion, though a small number, of teachers feel that teacher aides are not their equals in the professional situation, and in the case of faculty meetings, where school matters of a directive level are handled, they resist teacher-aide interference and participation in discussions of policy.

Although not established in every school, coffee breaks are becoming more common. Teachers enjoy this opportunity to be away from serious activity for a period of refreshment, rest, and conversation. The question asked was: "Are teacher aides eligible to join with teachers at coffee breaks?" Both principals (96.2%) and teachers (87.8%) in preponderant majorities replied affirmatively.

Table 48. *Understanding of criteria used for evaluating teacher-aide work**

Understanding of criteria	Teachers		Teacher aides	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Very well	115	17.7	199	48.9
Adequately	285	43.8	151	37.1
Poorly	232	35.7	28	6.9
No response	18	2.8	29	7.1

* Each group, teachers and teacher aides, were asked to respond to the question: "How well do you understand the criteria used for evaluating teacher-aide work?"

Table 49. *Acceptance of teacher aides: permitted activities*

Activity	Percentage of agreement		
	Principals	Teachers	Teacher aides
Use teachers lounge	94.0	92.9	91.2
Attend faculty meetings . .	61.7	33.8	24.3
Join teachers at coffee breaks	96.2	87.8	76.4
Attend P. T. A. meetings as part of job	63.9	50.8	38.8
Conversation with teachers .	91.0	89.2	93.6

A slightly lower percentage (76.4%) of teacher aides agreed. The small difference in view between teacher aides and their supervisors may be due to some form of psychological block whereby the aides, because of lack of formal invitation to attend or sense of nonacceptance, felt excluded.

For one activity—attendance at P. T. A. meetings—where teacher aides might become acquainted with the public and particularly the parents, there are strong differences in views among the three groups. Attendance of teacher aides at these meetings was endorsed by 63.9 percent of the principals. A bare majority (50.8%) of the teachers agreed. Only 38.8 percent of the teacher aides believed this was approved. The probable reason for this situation is once again the lack of communication and clear-cut policy statements by supervisors, plus neglecting to encourage the aides directly. Teacher aides are not likely to attend such meetings unless they know their presence is acceptable and encouraged. Whether many principals and teachers are reticent to present their teacher aides to the public is not known.

It seems impossible for a school to operate in such a manner as to prevent informal conversation and discussion between teachers and teacher aides, yet a small percentage of each group admitted that this was so. It is regrettable that such circumstances should exist, since personnel blocks of this order can only result in deterioration of aide morale and effectiveness. In general, however, the prevailing atmosphere surrounding the teacher aides is friendly and without intra-position iron curtains.

Role Conception of Teacher Aides

Each group of respondents was asked to comment on several statements concerning teacher-aide role. Three of them were general in character, the other five related to specific activities. The intent of the inquiry was to determine the degree of freedom given teacher aides and the extent of domination by their supervisors (table 50).

The groups agreed in percentages above 80 that teacher-aide contact with pupils should be on the basis of approval by the supervising teachers. This limiting factor suggests that aides should not be given complete freedom and immediate access to pupils without teachers first deciding that the action is timely, reasonable, worthwhile, and in line with good professional practice. In this sense, teacher aides, because of employment, do not automatically become experts in dealing with children. They need extensive professional control and counsel by teachers in matters, both personal and instructional, in the classroom. Only one person—the teacher—has authority in the classroom. The ultimate decisions and determinations are hers.

Exploration of subordinate roles discloses support for the policy that teacher aides perform only those duties assigned to them by supervising teachers. By slight majorities all three groups agree that this should be the case. Since there is a substantial minority, it is appropriate to ask why. The minority probably feel that some freedom should be given in assigned tasks, so that aides have an opportunity to determine what they can do in addition to teacher-directed efforts. They recognize that the personal attributes and creative talents of the aides can be used in controlled circumstances to enhance the teaching situation. It is obvious that when a teacher aide acts only in a delegated capacity, she becomes completely dependent on the teacher and may be stifled in matters of initiative and implementation, a result that may lower her sense of responsibility, morale, drive, and constructive effort.

The teacher aide as a partner to the supervising teacher was regarded as the necessary role by slight majorities of all groups. Principals and teacher aides were a little more convinced of this view than teachers. Partnership, as conceived by these majorities, relates to team effort of teacher and aide, both parties accepting their respective roles and expecting their partners to perform according to and in concert with their own efforts. Opposition to this point of view, as expressed by the minority, infers nonacceptance of the aide as a working partner. The aide is placed in a decidedly secondary position, subservient in nature, with little if any opportunity to enter into mutual constructive effort and combination of operation.

Occasionally, the supervising teacher must leave her pupils for a few minutes. Either the children are left alone or substitute supervision is obtained. The question was raised whether teacher aides should act as supervisors during these absences. Responses to the suggestion were for the most part, strongly supportive, although surprisingly, some of the teacher aides were not certain. This is a possible teacher-aide activity that, at least for a short time, entails considerable responsibility. It is true that the normal pattern is peace and quiet and that the expectancy of trouble or breakdown is usually remote.

Table 50. *Group viewpoints of the teacher-aide role*

Teacher-aide role	Group	Percentage agreement	Percentage disagreement	Percentage no response
1. In general, teacher-aide contact with pupils should be on the basis of approval by teacher.	Principals	87.2	11.3	1.5
	Teachers	89.2	9.2	1.5
	T. aides	83.8	9.3	6.9
2. The teacher aide is best conceived of as a partner rather than as a subordinate to the teacher.	Principals	62.4	34.6	3.0
	Teachers	56.6	39.4	4.0
	T. aides	59.5	31.0	9.6
3. The teacher aide should perform only those duties that are assigned her by the teacher.	Principals	64.7	33.8	1.5
	Teachers	59.5	36.8	3.7
	T. aides	65.6	26.3	8.1
4. The teacher aide should be permitted to supervise pupils when the teacher is not present.	Principals	83.5	16.5	0.0
	Teachers	87.5	10.8	1.7
	T. aides	78.1	6.6	15.2
5. The teacher aide should primarily handle details that support classroom teaching.	Principals	84.2	15.8	0.0
	Teachers	81.2	15.1	3.7
	T. aides	72.5	18.2	9.3
6. When the classroom teacher feels the teacher aide is competent, the aide should be permitted to teach.	Principals	47.4	47.4	5.3
	Teachers	46.8	49.2	4.0
	T. aides	57.2	34.2	8.6
7. The teacher aide should assist the teacher in planning for teaching.	Principals	55.6	42.9	1.5
	Teachers	39.2	58.0	2.8
	T. aides	41.3	47.9	10.8
8. The teacher aide should be allowed to act as a substitute when the teacher is absent from school.	Principals	19.5	78.2	2.3
	Teachers	18.8	77.4	3.8
	T. aides	36.4	53.6	10.1

Granting this supervisory privilege to the aide either displays confidence or subscribes to a policy of "some supervision is better than none".

The respondents who disagreed with this role may object partly on the grounds that teacher aides are not qualified, particularly because they lack certification. This point of view is sometimes based on the possibility of tort action against the teacher and the school district, whereby it may be construed that teacher aides are not competent to supervise. This is a debatable point and at issue in many parts of the state. No simple answer may be given. A procedure that may help overcome blocks to the use of teacher aides is the method of prior approval. Herein, each teacher aide is considered in the light of her supervisory capacities, and it is stated, when possible, that the aide is competent to supervise within certain stipulated conditions. This should be a matter for the board of education, written into the record, but it could be an administrative detail, provided there are board minutes indicating the persons to whom this responsibility is delegated.

Principals, teachers, and teacher aides were asked to agree or disagree with the statement that "the teacher aide should primarily handle details which support class-

room teaching." This is a question of priority. Other forms of activity are not excluded; detail handling is considered as the major concern. With this statement all three groups strongly agree. As suggested by the title "teacher aide," the person so serving has a principal duty of helping the teacher with her instructional job. Classroom details are many and time-consuming. Teacher efforts are best directed into course construction, planning, and teaching so that her professional expertise may best be used. Teacher aides can and do take over many of the details, thus providing the teacher with more time to devote to her major tasks.

Preoccupation with details is often a clue to job insecurity and the inability to perform within the context of changing circumstances. A very small minority of teachers find it easy to fill in their time with large amounts of paper work and detail, often of no real consequence. With these teachers, there is a built-in resistance to teacher-aide assistance with details; such action becomes a threat to the teacher's existence.

Fortunately this is not so for most teachers. They are interested in their primary role—teaching—and wish to be relieved from secondary activities. As a result, teacher aides are welcomed as disposers of detail.

Although detail handling is recognized as the principal occupation of a teacher aide, what else might she do? Could she possibly do some teaching? Principals and teachers are about equally divided on this question. More than half of the teacher aides would like to teach. Approximately half of the principals and teachers support a completely noninstructional approach for aides, with the emphasis on handling details. The other half of the supervisors are convinced that aides should be used largely for detail matters, but could also be given opportunities to teach when competency is assured.

In some schools, teacher aides are responsible to many teachers and perform but one or two specific tasks for individuals. Here there is no one-to-one relationship of aide to teacher and certainly little opportunity for teaching. The short contacts with teachers and resultant lack of close partnership preclude it. Although the study limitations restricted our analysis to teacher aides who primarily function in the classroom, it was discovered that many principals did include teacher aides who were really specific-task oriented. Both kinds of services are needed, but there should be a distinction between those individuals hired to work in general instructional and detail capacities and those whose main involvement is in the classroom.

Planning is an essential part of teaching. Should the teacher aides be involved? A majority (55.6%) of the principals said yes. Teachers and teacher aides tended to say no. Most of the principals believe that planning entails some joint participation of teachers and aides in the development of daily and future instructional operations. Many teachers, on the other hand, tend to resist any interference with their traditional rights. From their viewpoint, teacher-aide involvement in planning constitutes interposition, even eventual replacement. Planning is defended as a teacher prerogative by this group, as solely professional, and not within the teacher aides' realm or understanding. This is an unfortunate attitude, since help of any sort ought to be welcome, and moreover, if replacement is the danger, the teacher must not have served her primary purpose as an instructional leader and hence ought to be replaced.

The reluctance of the majority of teacher aides to subscribe to planning assistance is explained in several ways. Many aides have spent nearly all of their time in handling details and noninstructional duties. They are not accustomed to the factors that constitute instruction, neither have they taught. They do not wish to be involved with such matters, preferring details, or they feel trepidation concerning engagement in instructional matters, mistrusting their own competence. They have never been consulted in matters of planning and have no idea of the factors involved.

One of the ultimate responsibilities that a teacher aide might have to assume is the role of substitute teacher.

Reaction to this role was asked of the three groups. By large majorities, it was rejected in each case.

Examination of the minority group of teacher aides (36.4%) who favored the role of substitute teaching disclosed that among them were many former teachers—some certified, many inexperienced—who were unable to find positions in their certification areas. As might be expected, they demonstrated a strong desire to teach and believed, because they were experienced and/or certified, that they were qualified to do so, particularly as substitutes. Others in the minority group, although not certified, see the teachers and their jobs as no great mystery, and, because of their backgrounds and abilities, feel able to replace the teacher for at least a few days.

This is really an unanswered question. There is no evidence in this study that substitute teaching by teacher aides has been tried. It is suggested, however, that where a teacher aide has become a partner in the fullest measure, she has been given considerable leeway to act on her own, to do some teaching, and to handle groups of children. Under these circumstances, where there is faith in the person and proven abilities, could she not, for a short period, replace the regular teacher?

Teachers were asked to state their views based on experience with teacher aides. In so responding, their concepts of aide role were often revealed. Many views were at odds. Although not necessarily reflecting the majorities, some of these views are reported below.

Teacher Viewpoints

Selection of Teacher Aides

1. The most important factor is the teacher aide's personality.
2. The teacher aide must enjoy children and be able to work with them.
3. The teacher aide must have a high sense of integrity and ethics.
4. The teacher aide must be able to handle the confidentiality of the classroom, be neither a gossip or a fifth columnist.
5. Schools should determine the job to be done and fit the aide to the job, not the job to the aide.
6. Teacher aides must be in sympathy with the school program.
7. Teacher aides must be able to carry out their responsibilities.
8. Classroom teachers should be involved in the selection process.

Training of Teacher Aides

1. Teacher aides need a period of training or orientation before working with a teacher.
2. A teacher must expect to instruct her teacher aide in the actual operating of her classroom. This is admittedly time-consuming but important.

3. Teacher aides should have training in child behavior, discipline and group control, professional conduct, and school objectives.
4. Special training should be required of any teacher aide who is to work with children having learning difficulties.
5. Enough training should be given so that the aide can work partly on her own initiative rather than under complete teacher direction.
6. Before a teacher aide is permitted to teach, there should be some kind of evidence that she can teach, perhaps through "pre-teaching" tryouts.

Descriptions of Teacher-Aide Job

1. A set of rules should be established indicating what a teacher aide may and may not do.
2. A realistic program for teacher-aide use should be determined that eliminates occasional effort and busy work.
3. The duties of teacher aides are often too limited.
4. Each teacher aide should have a special purpose.
5. Duties of teacher aides are often so poorly defined by principals that teachers do not know how to use them.
6. Duties of teacher aides should be defined by the teaching profession.
7. In the last analysis, the activities of teacher aides depend on the teacher's decision and the amount of time the aide has been working with the teacher.
8. The best strengths of an aide should be emphasized. If she has a special talent it should be used.

The Teacher and the Teacher Aide

1. The teacher must run the show.
2. Teacher aides need much attention and counsel by the teachers.
3. The use of teacher aides should be comfortable for both teacher and aide.
4. Proper use of the teacher aide results in improved teaching and an unhurried manner when dealing with pupils.
5. With teacher aides, the teacher can enlarge her teaching scope and make better preparation for her teaching.
6. Teacher aides must assist and work closely with teachers.
7. Teacher aides are invaluable in team teaching.
8. The main function of the teacher aide is to help the teacher provide a better learning environment.
9. To be effective, teachers and teacher aides must plan together and work as a team.
10. For effective use of the teacher aide, there must be mutual respect between teacher and teacher aide.
11. There should be a teacher aide in every classroom and one for every group of 20 to 30 pupils.
12. Teachers should be trained in the use of teacher aides.
13. Teacher aides need constant praise and recognition.

Limitations of Teacher Aides

1. Teacher aides must not overstep into the boundaries of teacher responsibilities.
2. A good teacher aide is an asset, a poor one is a liability.
3. Communication with teacher aides is often difficult.
4. Teacher aides are sometimes quite slow in carrying out their responsibilities.
5. Unless the teacher aide is in sympathy with the school program, trouble will arise.

6. Some aides can do only routine work.
7. The activities of a teacher aide depend on the amount of time the teacher has had her assistance.
8. Teacher aides cannot be used effectively in the classroom if their time is split among too many teachers.
9. The value of a teacher aide to a teacher is very limited if she is in the school only 1 or 2 hours a day.
10. Teacher aides should not be permitted to undermine the teacher.
11. It must be recognized that teacher aides do not have the same professional know-how as teachers.

Teacher-Aide Activities

Principals, teachers, and teacher aides were requested to examine a list of 78 possible teacher-aide activities.⁴ They were asked to indicate which activities were in actual practice in their schools and whether, ideally, they were appropriate to teacher-aide functions (table 51).

Surprisingly, all of the activities were reported as in actual use, varying in percentages from a high of 90.2 (Principals: Duplicate materials as directed) to a low of 1.5 (Principals: Compose classroom tests; and Teachers: Visit pupils' homes on own initiative).

Taken as a whole, the responses of the three groups indicate that the teacher aides are involved in a large number of varying activities dependent on factors such as the nature of the school district, philosophies involving engagement of teacher aides, the school budget, and the number of teacher aides. Uniform practices do not appear to be common and perhaps they should not be if teacher-aide employment is in part predicated on the uniqueness of the school situation and pressing needs.

That each of these activities is found in at least a small degree once again raises the question concerning the use, actual and potential, of teacher aides. Were we to consider that any use at all constitutes a basis for general use, we would need to conclude that the teacher aide could assume many more facets of classroom operation than are generally in practice. Finally, were all of these facets accepted as included in the role of teacher aide, we would need to examine the position of the teacher and clearly identify her assignment as classroom leader; there is no doubt that she would have greater opportunity to concentrate on the prime purposes of her profession.

What then constitutes teacher leadership and to what degree can a teacher relinquish details and functions and still act as chief executive of the classroom? Teacher aides are not hired to replace teachers; they are conceived as being teacher helpers—to assist teachers in

⁴ The list of activities was developed from data obtained from previous phases of this continuing paraprofessional study and from teacher-aide publications that have been received from many sources across the country.

Table 51. *Actual and ideal teacher-aide activities*

Activity	Agreement (in percent)			Rank order (combined groups)		Activity	Agreement (in percent)			Rank order (combined groups)	
	Group	Actual	Ideal	Actual	Ideal		Group	Actual	Ideal	Actual	Ideal
Duplicate materials as directed.	Principals . . .	90.2	80.5	1	2	Participate in school meetings open to public.	Principals . . .	66.9	78.9	24	29
	Teachers . . .	85.4	86.0				Teachers . . .	52.0	75.1		
	T. aides . . .	77.9	69.5				T. aides . . .	48.4	58.7		
Refer serious classroom control problems to teacher.	Principals . . .	86.5	82.0	2	3	Assist teacher in library search.	Principals . . .	72.2	82.7	26	11
	Teachers . . .	70.2	79.5				Teachers . . .	47.2	76.5		
	T. aides . . .	76.7	69.8				T. aides . . .	47.7	62.7		
Work with slow pupils.	Principals . . .	82.7	72.2	3	14½	Assist pupils in library search.	Principals . . .	76.7	85.0	26	4½
	Teachers . . .	72.2	75.8				Teachers . . .	46.3	80.6		
	T. aides . . .	71.7	73.2				T. aides . . .	42.3	65.8		
Do errands for teacher.	Principals . . .	79.7	72.9	4	30½	Explain school regulations to pupils.	Principals . . .	59.4	63.9	26	37
	Teachers . . .	66.3	70.2				Teachers . . .	44.9	62.9		
	T. aides . . .	79.4	67.1				T. aides . . .	61.4	63.9		
Handle small group while teacher handles large group.	Principals . . .	82.7	80.5	5	4½	Answer telephone and intercom.	Principals . . .	63.2	66.2	28	41
	Teachers . . .	67.5	78.2				Teachers . . .	44.9	55.4		
	T. aides . . .	71.7	74.2				T. aides . . .	60.0	58.0		
Help pupils with remedial work.	Principals . . .	79.7	74.4	6	14½	Arrange flannel boards, posters, charts, etc., as directed.	Principals . . .	71.4	85.0	29	6
	Teachers . . .	67.8	73.5				Teachers . . .	45.1	79.1		
	T. aides . . .	65.1	71.5				T. aides . . .	48.4	65.6		
Report to teachers on lack of pupil understanding.	Principals . . .	75.9	76.7	7½	9	Grade objective tests against key.	Principals . . .	67.7	82.7	30	19½
	Teachers . . .	68.0	78.3				Teachers . . .	49.1	72.3		
	T. aides . . .	67.8	68.8				T. aides . . .	47.9	61.9		
Listen to pupils talk about themselves.	Principals . . .	78.2	75.2	7½	24	Arrange use of audio-visual recorders, projectors, etc.	Principals . . .	46.0	76.5	31	23
	Teachers . . .	59.8	70.5				Teachers . . .	71.4	82.0		
	T. aides . . .	74.9	67.8				T. aides . . .	47.2	60.4		
Help pupils with seat work, experiments and workbooks.	Principals . . .	80.5	78.2	9	16	Set up and operate audio-visual recorders, projectors, etc.	Principals . . .	43.1	76.2	32	18
	Teachers . . .	58.3	74.3				Teachers . . .	69.9	83.5		
	T. aides . . .	64.9	66.1				T. aides . . .	48.4	64.4		
Help pupils to settle arguments without fighting.	Principals . . .	69.2	71.4	10	30½	Work with isolated and troubled pupils.	Principals . . .	51.9	51.9	33	44
	Teachers . . .	61.8	71.7				Teachers . . .	48.0	58.9		
	T. aides . . .	71.5	67.3				T. aides . . .	52.8	56.0		
Take sick pupil to school nurse.	Principals . . .	57.1	76.6	11	7	Keep classroom attractive.	Principals . . .	66.9	80.5	34	39
	Teachers . . .	78.2	82.7				Teachers . . .	37.2	67.8		
	T. aides . . .	65.6	67.6				T. aides . . .	55.0	25.8		
Help teacher with various supervisory duties—hall, buses, etc.	Principals . . .	75.9	79.7	12	19½	Prepare classroom displays.	Principals . . .	66.9	81.2	35	25
	Teachers . . .	58.3	77.2				Teachers . . .	38.9	70.0		
	T. aides . . .	58.5	61.9				T. aides . . .	50.6	62.2		
Help teachers supervise field trips.	Principals . . .	83.5	87.2	13	1	Take notes when requested by the teacher.	Principals . . .	60.2	77.4	36	34½
	Teachers . . .	53.7	83.8				Teachers . . .	42.5	63.7		
	T. aides . . .	51.1	69.0				T. aides . . .	48.9	61.2		
Do typing for teachers.	Principals . . .	70.7	79.7	14½	17	Collect money and handle accounts.	Principals . . .	72.2	84.2	37	27½
	Teachers . . .	66.2	82.0				Teachers . . .	38.6	73.4		
	T. aides . . .	58.5	59.5				T. aides . . .	38.1	51.4		
Help pupils understand instruction and assignments.	Principals . . .	70.7	69.9	14½	33	Discipline pupils on own initiative.	Principals . . .	36.8	31.6	38	55
	Teachers . . .	54.9	68.6				Teachers . . .	45.7	46.9		
	T. aides . . .	63.9	66.1				T. aides . . .	60.2	53.3		
Make inventories of books, equipment.	Principals . . .	78.9	85.7	16	8	Collect and file resource material such as maps, etc.	Principals . . .	38.3	73.4	39	21
	Teachers . . .	54.8	80.0				Teachers . . .	64.7	82.7		
	T. aides . . .	54.8	62.4				T. aides . . .	42.3	62.9		
Handle drill and practice work.	Principals . . .	78.2	81.2	17	13	Handle filing and loaning of classroom library material.	Principals . . .	69.2	82.7	40	27½
	Teachers . . .	60.2	74.2				Teachers . . .	38.6	71.7		
	T. aides . . .	49.9	63.1				T. aides . . .	37.3	57.5		
Report evidences of health problems to teacher.	Principals . . .	54.9	72.5	18	12	Handle classroom housekeeping.	Principals . . .	63.9	73.7	41	47
	Teachers . . .	75.9	85.0				Teachers . . .	30.5	54.6		
	T. aides . . .	56.8	66.8				T. aides . . .	41.3	38.1		
Distribute seat work to pupils.	Principals . . .	72.9	78.9	19	32	Carry out teacher-prescribed disciplinary action.	Principals . . .	24.8	24.1	42	57½
	Teachers . . .	46.0	63.7				Teachers . . .	37.7	43.5		
	T. aides . . .	60.0	64.1				T. aides . . .	62.9	57.7		
Handle routine notices.	Principals . . .	68.4	75.9	20	34½	Work with advanced pupils.	Principals . . .	48.1	67.7	43	43
	Teachers . . .	51.7	68.9				Teachers . . .	41.8	66.3		
	T. aides . . .	58.5	60.9				T. aides . . .	35.6	45.3		
Take responsibility for classroom when teacher is away.	Principals . . .	48.9	48.1	21	38	Work with pupils' behavioral problems.	Principals . . .	45.9	51.1	44	56
	Teachers . . .	49.8	58.3				Teachers . . .	33.4	41.8		
	T. aides . . .	73.5	68.3				T. aides . . .	45.2	47.7		
Arrange classroom materials for easy accessibility.	Principals . . .	72.9	85.0	22	26	Take care of classroom interest centers.	Principals . . .	51.9	77.4	45	46
	Teachers . . .	42.5	68.3				Teachers . . .	29.8	18.8		
	T. aides . . .	52.8	60.4				T. aides . . .	35.1	54.8		
Help orient new pupils.	Principals . . .	65.4	79.7	23	10	Repair classroom books.	Principals . . .	45.9	67.7	46	42
	Teachers . . .	49.2	78.0				Teachers . . .	31.1	66.3		
	T. aides . . .	53.3	66.1				T. aides . . .	37.3	50.1		

Table 51 (continued). *Actual and ideal teacher-aide activities*

Activity	Agreement (in percent)			Rank order (combined groups)		Activity	Agreement (in percent)			Rank order (combined groups)	
	Group	Actual	Ideal	Actual	Ideal		Group	Actual	Ideal	Actual	Ideal
Advise with pupils having learning problems.	Principals . . .	34.6	35.3	47	59	Correct grammar used on pupils' papers.	Principals . . .	25.6	35.3	62½	63
	Teachers . . .	34.8	43.5				Teachers . . .	21.1	33.7		
	T. aides . . .	44.7	51.1				T. aides . . .	30.0	44.0		
Record grades in teacher's grade book.	Principals . . .	51.1	61.7	48½	49	Compute pupils' averages and rankings.	Principals . . .	32.3	52.6	62½	60
	Teachers . . .	28.6	49.2				Teachers . . .	22.2	45.1		
	T. aides . . .	32.4	50.6				T. aides . . .	21.6	40.0		
Handle classroom temperature, fresh air, and lighting.	Principals . . .	26.3	46.0	48½	54	Record data on report card.	Principals . . .	35.3	53.4	65	57½
	Teachers . . .	48.1	60.9				Teachers . . .	18.3	40.0		
	T. aides . . .	32.2	39.1				T. aides . . .	24.3	44.5		
Assist pupils with programmed instruction machines.	Principals . . .	48.9	83.5	50	22	Take care of first-aid equipment.	Principals . . .	34.6	55.6	66½	61
	Teachers . . .	30.3	73.4				Teachers . . .	18.8	40.6		
	T. aides . . .	30.2	60.0				T. aides . . .	18.7	34.4		
Make entries on chalkboard for teachers.	Principals . . .	51.1	71.4	51½	40	Inform parents when pupil is ill.	Principals . . .	18.8	36.0	66½	64
	Teachers . . .	23.1	51.5				Teachers . . .	26.3	43.6		
	T. aides . . .	32.7	55.8				T. aides . . .	21.1	32.7		
Fill in teacher's attendance register and forms.	Principals . . .	47.4	57.9	51½	50	Guard doors of classroom.	Principals . . .	21.8	26.3	68	70
	Teachers . . .	26.5	48.6				Teachers . . .	14.3	23.2		
	T. aides . . .	35.1	50.9				T. aides . . .	25.6	29.0		
Make overlays for projectors.	Principals . . .	50.4	78.2	53	36	Complete accident reports.	Principals . . .	22.6	35.3	69	69
	Teachers . . .	28.9	69.7				Teachers . . .	12.0	25.1		
	T. aides . . .	27.3	50.9				T. aides . . .	12.3	20.9		
Make seating charts.	Principals . . .	48.9	67.7	54½	51	Maintain pupil health records in classroom.	Principals . . .	16.5	30.8	70	68
	Teachers . . .	32.0	51.1				Teachers . . .	10.8	30.9		
	T. aides . . .	22.9	40.5				T. aides . . .	9.1	27.0		
Chaperone pupils at special events.	Principals . . .	42.1	55.6	54½	45	Assist teachers in discussions with parents.	Principals . . .	10.5	28.6	71	71
	Teachers . . .	28.2	55.8				Teachers . . .	7.7	21.4		
	T. aides . . .	36.9	54.8				T. aides . . .	11.8	22.6		
Prepare teacher's orders for school library material.	Principals . . .	46.6	66.9	56	48	Write comments for pupils' achievement records.	Principals . . .	6.8	12.8	72½	74
	Teachers . . .	28.9	57.4				Teachers . . .	4.8	14.3		
	T. aides . . .	21.9	42.8				T. aides . . .	11.8	21.6		
Announce teacher-prepared assignments.	Principals . . .	41.4	52.6	57	52	Take pupils home when they are ill.	Principals . . .	6.6	22.3	72½	72
	Teachers . . .	21.7	36.0				Teachers . . .	13.5	30.8		
	T. aides . . .	34.4	46.2				T. aides . . .	7.4	15.7		
Obtain pupil data for teacher from different school sources.	Principals . . .	37.6	51.9	58	53	Visit pupils' homes at request of teacher.	Principals . . .	14.3	27.8	74	73
	Teachers . . .	24.0	51.2				Teachers . . .	4.8	15.4		
	T. aides . . .	20.6	43.7				T. aides . . .	5.9	20.6		
Issue passes.	Principals . . .	30.1	39.1	59	62	Make home contacts (telephone or written) on own initiative.	Principals . . .	3.8	8.3	75	77
	Teachers . . .	17.5	33.1				Teachers . . .	2.6	3.7		
	T. aides . . .	32.2	46.2				T. aides . . .	5.7	7.1		
Correct and evaluate pupil homework.	Principals . . .	18.8	24.1	60	67	Compose classroom tests.	Principals . . .	1.5	7.5	76	76
	Teachers . . .	20.5	24.9				Teachers . . .	2.5	5.1		
	T. aides . . .	34.6	42.8				T. aides . . .	9.1	10.3		
Make home contacts (telephone or written) at direction of teacher.	Principals . . .	28.6	39.1	62½	66	Supervise field trips without teacher being present.	Principals . . .	3.8	12.0	77	75
	Teachers . . .	20.9	31.4				Teachers . . .	2.5	6.2		
	T. aides . . .	26.5	37.1				T. aides . . .	4.2	12.0		
Give first aid.	Principals . . .	27.1	44.4	62½	65	Visit pupils' homes on own initiative.	Principals . . .	2.3	5.3	78	78
	Teachers . . .	21.2	33.1				Teachers . . .	1.5	4.0		
	T. aides . . .	25.8	30.7				T. aides . . .	2.9	5.4		

reaching educational objectives. The evidence in this study indicates heavy involvement of teacher aides in classroom operation. This can only mean that teachers are being assisted and that they are currently not subject to as many responsibilities, often mundane in character, as they once were. In consequence, their major roles as classroom leaders must be reexamined and when clarified, emphasized and put into force.

Each teacher must ask herself what her major responsibility as a professional person is, so that she may, with the help of the paraprofessional, use her professional knowledge and educational leadership most effectively. To use a teacher aide efficaciously, the teacher must turn

away from traditional roles and relinquish many details of her classroom, while still holding the reins of classroom direction. This cannot be done unless there is true leadership in the best sense of professionalism—where the teacher admits to being a part of a team including the aide or aides, but still remains chief officer and is recognized as such because of her greater expertise and experience. Although the teacher is assumed to be the most knowledgeable person in the classroom, this is not an immutable situation, since a professional must keep up with the changes in her field and ahead of those who work under her.

With the assistance of an aide, the teacher should

handle the crucial elements of teaching, surrendering others matters to the aide whenever necessary and possible. The presence of an aide is no real threat to an accomplished and up-to-date teacher. Properly used, the aide makes it possible for the teacher to take on her true professional identity, look ahead, plan, and utilize her expertise in a more successful manner without the encumbrance of minor concerns.

Rank Order of Activities

To determine the rank order of teacher-aide activities, combined group action was obtained. The most frequent and least reported actual and ideal teacher-aide activities are listed as follows:

Most Frequently Reported Actual Teacher-Aide Activities (in Rank Order)

- 1. Duplicate materials as directed.
- 2. Refer serious classroom control problems to teacher.
- 3. Work with slow pupils.
- 4. Do errands for teachers.
- 5. Handle small groups while teacher handles large groups.
- 6. Help pupils with remedial work.
- 7½. Report to teachers on lack of pupil understanding.
- 7½. Listen to pupils talk about themselves.
- 9. Help pupils with seat work, experiments, and workbooks.
- 10. Help pupils to settle arguments without fighting.

Most Frequently Reported Ideal Teacher-Aide Activities (in Rank Order)

- 1. Help teachers supervise field trips.
- 2. Duplicate materials as directed.
- 3. Refer serious classroom control problems to teacher.
- 4½. Handle small groups while teacher handles large group.
- 4½. Assist pupils in library search.
- 6. Arrange flannel boards, posters, charts, etc. as directed.
- 7. Take sick pupil to school nurse.
- 8. Make inventories of books and equipment.
- 9. Report to teachers on lack of pupil understanding.
- 10. Help orient new pupils.

Least Frequently Reported Actual Teacher-Aide Activities (in Rank Order)

- 69. Complete accident reports.
- 70. Maintain pupil health records in classroom.
- 71. Assist teachers in discussions with parents.
- 72½. Write comments for pupils' achievement records.
- 72½. Take pupils home when they are ill.
- 74. Visit pupils' homes at request of teacher.

- 75. Make home contacts (telephone or written) on own initiative.
- 76. Compose classroom tests.
- 77. Supervise field trips without teacher being present.
- 78. Visit pupils' homes on own initiative.

Least Frequently Reported Ideal Teacher-Aide Activities (in Rank Order)

- 69. Complete accident reports.
- 70. Guard doors of classroom.
- 71. Assist teachers in discussions with parents.
- 72. Take pupils home when they are ill.
- 73. Visit pupils' home at request of teacher.
- 74. Write comments for pupils' achievement records.
- 75. Supervise field trips without teacher being present.
- 76. Compose classroom tests.
- 77. Make home contacts (telephone or written) on own initiative.
- 78. Visit pupils' homes on own initiative.

When all 78 actual and ideal activity rankings are compared, a correlation⁵ of .88 is found. This indicates that the rank order of actual and ideal teacher-aide activities are similar, that what is actually being done by the aides is, for the most part, what ought to be done. This is particularly of interest because each group indicated that the activities should generally be in greater use (table 52).

Table 52. Actual and ideal mean use of 78 activities by groups: all activities

Group	Actual	Ideal
Principals	50.0	60.4
Teachers	39.3	56.1
Teacher aides	42.1	50.6

In contrast, the rank order of certain activities differed strongly from actual and ideal points of views.

Decrease in Rank from Actual to Ideal		
	Actual rank	Ideal rank
Do errands for teachers.	4	30½
Listen to pupils talk about themselves.	7½	24
Help pupils to settle arguments without fighting.	10	30½
Help pupils understand instruction and assignments.	14½	33

⁵ Using Spearman Rank-Difference Correlation Method.

Handle routine notices.	20	34%
Take responsibility for classroom when teacher is away.	21	38
Distribute seat work to pupils.	19	32
Answer telephone and intercom.	28	41
Discipline pupils on own initiative.	38	55
Carry out teacher prescribed disciplinary action.	42	57½

Increase in Rank from Actual to Ideal

Help to orient new pupils.	23	10
Assist teacher in library search.	26	11
Assist pupils in library search.	26	4½
Arrange flannel boards, posters, charts, etc.	29	6
Set up and operate audio-visual recorders, etc.	32	18
Help teachers supervise field trips.	13	1
Grade objective tests against key.	30	19½
Collect and file resource material such as maps.	39	21
Handle filing and loaning of classroom library material.	40	27½
Assist pupils with programmed instruction machines.	50	22
Make entries on chalkboard for teachers.	51½	40
Make overlays for projectors.	53	36
Prepare teacher's orders for school library material.	56	48

These changes must be judged from the standpoint of priority rather than support. Although each activity generally showed higher percentages in ideal rather than in actual context, their relative importance is revealed by their rank orders.

General Categories of Work

For the purpose of priority consideration, the 78 teacher-aide activities were divided into 9 general categories. These categories were: (1) secretarial work, (2) data compiling and record keeping, (3) supervision and discipline of pupils, (4) actual teaching and direct contact with pupils in respect to teaching, (5) routine classroom details, (6) correction of pupil work and testing, (7) audio-visual, interest center, and programmed-instruction activities, (8) first aid and health involvement, and (9) parental contact.

Secretarial Work

Nine teacher-aide activities were judged as primarily secretarial in nature. Estimation of the data reveals this general category to be in greatest use and also highest as

an ideal consideration. In the school districts studied, teacher aides are actually assisting teachers in secretarial matters; ideally, this type of work also takes the top priority position. Principals, in particular, believe this to be a chief function of teacher aides.

Group	Mean percentages	
	Actual	Ideal
Principals	74.0	79.9
Teachers	55.8	73.3
Teacher aides	59.8	63.1
All groups	64.3	72.1

Actual Teaching and Direct Contact with Pupils in Respect to Teaching

For the purpose of exploring the views about teacher-aide commitments, 13 teacher-aide activities were selected as representative. Over half of respondents admitted that teacher aides were involved in teaching. Two-thirds of the groups believed that ideally this should be a general practice. Such activities as handling drill and practice work, working with slow pupils, handling small groups while the teacher handles large groups, and helping pupils with seat work, experiments, and workbooks constitute forms of teaching. Such activities may be under the leadership and cognizance of the teacher, but the teacher aide must enjoy the confidence of her superiors and in part must work independently.

Group	Mean percentages	
	Actual	Ideal
Principals	67.0	69.5
Teachers	57.5	67.6
Teacher aides	55.7	62.5
All groups	58.4	66.5

Audio-Visual, Interest Center, and Programmed Instruction Activities

A category that is about third in importance as a teacher-aide concern includes audio-visual, interest center, and programmed instruction activities. Although the resources used for these activities vary extensively among school buildings and classrooms, nevertheless, almost half of the respondent groups indicated that teacher aides were involved, and over two-thirds felt this category to be a desirable teacher-aide concern. When mean actual and ideal uses are compared, a strong desire for deeper involvement appears.

Group	Mean percentages	
	Actual	Ideal
Principals	51.4	77.7
Teachers	45.6	69.6
Teacher aides	40.8	59.0
All groups	45.9	68.4

Supervision and Discipline of Pupils

This category of teacher-aide use was considered in two respects: when the aide acts with teacher approval or in company with the teacher and when the aide acts on her own initiative and responsibility. Responses indicated that in actual practice, teacher aides are carrying out supervisory and disciplinary activities with teacher approval or in company with teachers. Teachers, in particular, would like supervisory activities increased.

Although there is some support for independent teacher-aide action and responsibility, it is much less than for situations requiring teacher approval and presence. Some principals and teachers, but not teacher aides, are reluctant to give aides extensive freedom to initiate discipline and supervision without teacher approval. When there is clear-cut need for discipline, these two groups do not generally accept the aides' authority in either actual or ideal instances. On the other hand, duties presumed to be primarily supervisory in character are not judged as automatically leading to disciplinary action.

With teacher approval

Group	Mean percentages	
	Actual	Ideal
Principals	67.7	68.3
Teachers	55.0	71.0
Teacher aides	62.3	64.6
All groups	61.5	66.4

Under own initiative

Group	Mean percentages	
	Actual	Ideal
Principals	39.8	43.3
Teachers	33.1	44.4
Teacher aides	45.6	49.2
All groups	39.5	46.0

Routine Classroom Duties

A number of the activities carried on in the average classroom are neither secretarial nor instructional—necessary but routine—such as classroom housekeeping and errands. Whose job is it to handle them?

Study of pertinent activities reveals that the groups differed slightly in their actual and ideal views. Over two-thirds of the principals believed that these tasks were actually done by teacher aides, and over 70 percent of this group considered them ideal aide functions. Less than half of the teachers agreed that teacher aides were handling these activities, although over 60 percent felt that they should be. On the other hand, even though almost 60 percent of the teacher aides stated that they were so involved, only 50 percent believed such activities to be within the range of ideal concern.

Group	Mean percentages	
	Actual	Ideal
Principals	68.4	73.8
Teachers	46.1	63.4
Teacher aides	58.8	50.0
All groups	57.8	62.4

Correcting Pupil Work and Testing

This category of teacher-aide activity may be looked at in two ways; first, as operating under teacher control, and second, as managed under the aide's own initiative and judgment. Both conceptions were examined.

All three groups agreed that only a small fraction of teacher aides are presently permitted to act on their own initiative and judgment. There was only a slight predominance of ideal over actual.

For correcting pupils work or testing with supervision, there is much support both at actual and ideal levels. The teachers reported that less than 50 percent of the aides actually correct and test with teacher supervision, more than two-thirds of the teachers wanted the aides to perform this service. Similar increases from actual to ideal percentages also appeared for principals and teacher aides.

It is significant that all the groups have many reservations about giving teacher aides the option to judge pupil work without substantial teacher or standard means to control their judgments. This study indicates that pupil evaluation appears to be primarily a teacher responsibility.

On own initiative

Group	Mean percentages	
	Actual	Ideal
Principals	17.0	26.5
Teachers	14.0	24.6
Teacher aides	21.4	31.7
All groups	17.6	27.6

With teacher approval

Group	Mean percentages	
	Actual	Ideal
Principals	60.4	70.4
Teachers	47.0	67.3
Teacher aides	45.4	58.1
All groups	51.0	65.3

Entering Data and Keeping Records

Data and records are kept in many forms. Included in the classroom are recording grades, filling out report cards, keeping many accounts, filing, loaning, preparing orders, filling in attendance records, and making chalk-board entries. Each activity calls for responsibility, accuracy, neatness, and organization.

More than half of the principals indicated that they thought the teacher aides were engaged in these activities. About a quarter of the other two groups agreed with this view.

This is not true for the ideal situation. Over 60 percent of the principals and teachers supported these activities and slightly over half of the aides agreed.

Group	Mean percentages	
	Actual	Ideal
Principals	53.3	68.3
Teachers	28.8	60.0
Teacher aides	31.7	50.5
All groups	38.0	58.3

First Aid and Health Involvement

Of course the organization and staff arrangements of a school determine many of the features of first aid and health operations within a school. Some of the activities asked of the responding groups could not be answered affirmatively because of these limitations. Generally it was found that teacher aides are not much concerned with these activities nor do the majority of respondents feel that they should be.

Two activities stand out as exceptions to the general view. There was strong support for teacher-aide awareness and reporting of possible pupil health problems to the teacher and for their accompanying sick pupils to the nurse.

Group	Mean percentages	
	Actual	Ideal
Principals	29.4	46.5
Teachers	34.0	48.1
Teacher aides	27.0	37.2
All groups	30.3	44.0

Parental Contact

The extent to which teacher aides consulted with parents was studied in two respects: with teacher approval and on their own initiative.

The data indicate little parental contact being made by teacher aides on their own initiative. Nor is there any substantial support for doing so.

When teacher approval becomes the basis, there is slightly more support, but the percentages are so insignificant as to suggest general rejection by the group.

Practice and philosophy seem to limit parental contact to the professionals, principals, and teachers, and to exclude teacher aides from such contacts.

With teacher approval

Group	Mean percentages	
	Actual	Ideal
Principals	17.8	31.8
Teachers	11.1	22.7
Teacher aides	14.7	26.8
All groups	14.5	27.1

On own initiative

Group	Mean percentages	
	Actual	Ideal
Principals	3.1	6.8
Teachers	2.1	3.9
Teacher aides	4.3	6.3
All groups	3.1	5.7

Additional Teacher-Aide Activities

The principals, teachers, and teacher aides responding to the study were asked to indicate activities being performed by teacher aides that were in addition to the 78 items. These are reported as follows:

1. Repair and put up shelves
2. Act as mediator in debates
3. Read stories to children
4. Supervise play periods
5. Sing songs to children
6. Help with art programs
7. Make costumes for plays
8. Look after pets in classroom
9. Supervise nap period
10. Assist in fire and air raid drills
11. Assist children with clothing
12. Help an absentee to make up work
13. Work with pupils on special projects
14. Set up experiments
15. Conduct student question and discussion period
16. Proctor examinations

Study Summary

The data in this study of the role and status of teacher aides were taken from 6 consolidated city school districts, 14 suburban central schools, and 36 rural central school districts, selected at random to represent the state of New York. These data did not disclose large differences according to the types of school districts. Questionnaires were received from 133 building principals, 650 supervising teachers, and 407 teacher aides. A supervising teacher was considered as a person who worked with a teacher aide in the capacity of control over aide activity. The teacher aide was defined as a person who works directly with a teacher as a classroom assistant and/or teaches, supervises, monitors, or counsels pupils under the direction of a teacher.

Teacher aides appear to be assigned about equally to both experienced and inexperienced teachers. In general, supervising teachers have only one teacher aide, although slightly less than three-quarters of the teacher aides serve more than one teacher. A common teacher complaint concerned with this divided aide attention is based on the lack of close relationships, joint actions, and effective assistance; no one-to-one relationships are established, nor, as reported by most teachers, is a partnership maintained.

In general the preparation of teacher aides for their respective positions is derived more from in-service than pre-service training. Only a few schools require pre-service training, probably because most schools have a limited experience with teacher aides and because the kind of outside assistance that might be used to organize and implement training is scarce. Most aides are first engaged to serve in the schools, then evaluated for possible use, and finally trained by their respective supervisors. The resolution of the problem of successfully absorbing the aides into classroom and/or classroom functions is most often a teacher-teacher-aide matter, with the aides gradually adapting to the school environment and learning to handle such classroom details and responsibilities as are consistent with their abilities and interests.

The schools make little effort to individually and collectively convene teacher aides for both informal and formal study of the larger aspects of education, including some understanding of the educational objectives of the particular school and the organization and operation of the school district. This lack of understanding is realized by the minority of aides. They also sense a need for instruction in child psychology, methodology of teaching, control and supervision of children, individual and group interaction, and specific forms of instructional know-how. Such information is not presumed to be as advanced as that studied and learned over many years by the pro-

fessional staff. But the point must be made that over half of the teacher aides are actually teaching. In consequence, every school may need some kind of program to enhance the aides' knowledge about education and teaching, as well as the side issues that arise intermittently and are peculiar to individual situations.

Demographically and generally, teacher aides are middle-aged married women with children. Most of them live near the school and depend on their own cars for conveyance. They are high school graduates, half of whom have had higher education. Many have been former teachers or associated in other ways with the schools. Most of the teacher aides do not have children in school, although a few have as many as two children attending classes while they work. Their work backgrounds are diverse, with office secretary and sales work being those most commonly found as a previous means of livelihood.

Nearly 95 percent of the teacher aides are paid. Three-quarters of the schools finance them in part or wholly through the regular school budgets; governmental monies augment the regular school budgets or are the only financial source for 55 percent of the schools. In take-home pay, teacher aides receive a minimum of about \$25.00 per month to a maximum of slightly over \$300, the median for all aides being \$167.72. Fringe benefits are not applied in general; only sick leave with pay for 40.3 percent of the aides is of any significance. A relatively insignificant number of teacher aides (7.4%) add to their earnings through work carried on outside of school.

The schools prefer to have their teacher aides, both paid and voluntary, maintain regular schedules. In this sense, their accountability is constant. Of this group, 47.7 percent are full-time and 49.6 percent are part-time workers. Only a small fraction of the teacher aides (2.7%) are hit-or-miss workers and appear only when they wish to or are needed.

Recruitment of teacher aides seems to be most successful through school personnel offices and by word-of-mouth. The most effective ways for schools to secure aides are through their own resources and direct communications. Public service and communication facilities have not produced many teacher aides.

Measures of acceptance show that principals and supervising teachers highly value the teacher aides as part of the school team. Support by parents and pupils is somewhat less visible. According to the officials, most aides carry out their duties in an excellent fashion. This appears to be an overall view rather than definitive one because neither principals nor supervising teachers seem able to evaluate teacher aides on the basis of specific traits, duties, and accomplishments.

Acceptance as viewed in terms of prerogatives is somewhat different, although the general trend is to include teacher aides in all the social activities of the

school. There is a strong reaction against including aides in those school events that could be construed as professional. In many cases teachers are cautious, if not fearful, of permitting teacher aides to attend faculty meetings, to make contact with parents, and to attend any or all forms of activity where they might seem to trespass on the teachers' professional prerogatives. The teacher views herself correctly as the leader of the classroom but hedges on aide involvement when it appears to intrude into her empire. This seems somewhat strange because teachers as a whole desire teacher aides to be their partners.

Teacher aides often feel themselves isolated, at odds with what is going on in the school and ambiguous in their relations with teachers and pupils. Part of this difficulty lies in lack of communications, either because it is inherent in the school organization, neglected as an issue, or intended by principals and teachers. Most aides seem to be happy in their situations, admiring and liking their superiors, but there is an unfortunate minority who feel rejected and unappreciated.

There is strong evidence to show that teacher aides would like to do more than they are now doing. Some of their aspirations are probably too ambitious. The potentials of teacher aides are ignored at times and their full value unrealized. Many aides aspire to greater contact with pupils and to instructional assignments; others would like to obtain a higher degree or certification as a teacher. The door is open in some cases; yet it is clear that those considerations have not become a point of concern in most schools.

The study discloses that the teacher aides are carrying on a host of different activities. Some are performed more frequently than others, but all the 78 activities considered in this study are being carried on by some of the aides, and the study indicates that an increase in activities is justifiable. Careful scrutiny of each school and classroom, together with counsel and evaluation with the aide, could increase her output and best fit the circumstances. Teachers should use teacher aides when they can handle matters efficiently or relieve the teacher for other important classroom matters. Beyond this point, teachers should realize that partnership and mutual respect come about only when each party recognizes and gives way to the interests and strengths of the other. This is not to presuppose intervention of teacher aide into the teacher's prerogatives of leadership, rather, it is a picture of total team effort.

In the use of teacher aides, the question of priorities and limitations must be considered. What assistance is most required of aides and what restraints must be maintained? These questions were resolved through selection of key items in the questionnaires and the list of activities.

Priorities for teacher-aide use considered from most to least important appear to be as follows: (1) secretarial

work, (2) actual teaching and direct contact with pupils related to teaching, (3) routine classroom duties, (4) supervision and discipline of pupils, (5) correcting pupil work and testing, (6) audio-visual, interest-center, and programmed-instruction activities, (7) entering data and keeping records, (8) first aid and health involvement, and (9) parental contact.

Although aides are handling all of these categories of activities in some measure, there are differences in support. Secretarial work, actual teaching and direct contact with pupils in teaching, and routine classroom duties represent supported majority opinion. At the other end of the scale, parental contact, first aid and health involvement, and entering data and keeping records represent small minorities of support.

There is a distinction between teacher aides acting on their own initiative and acting only with teacher approval. The matters of correcting pupil work and testing and supervision and discipline show little support for teacher aides acting on their own initiative, but there is majority support where such action has prior approval by the supervising teacher.

Probably there are times when every teacher aide has encountered some question about her activities in regard to any one of the nine categories. Nevertheless, there is an area in some categories where teacher aides should not tread without a degree of supervision. These areas come very close to the field of teacher expertise where experience and training of a professional level are needed. Direct contact and control of pupils and evaluation of their work are probably within the frontiers of this required expertise, and only the guiding hand of the teacher should permit teacher-aide involvement. The question was not asked concerning category 2, actual teaching and direct contact with pupils in respect to teaching, but it is expected that a similar situation exists.

Issues and Conflict

When study data are considered in terms of implications, several questions arise, some of which need explanation, lead to speculation, and probably require further exploration.

What is the real role of a teacher aide?

The study shows that teacher aides are involved to some degree in all of the 78 activities and that other activities could have been added. The breadth of aide involvement covers much if not all of the range that is generally conceived as being within a teachers' classroom authority and responsibility. Frequently, the professional teacher's prerogatives are encroached upon.

We believe that in one sense a teacher can be replaced. Where a teacher aide is able to take care of a classroom function, the teacher does not need to be involved, except as her expertise is required to supervise and make certain that the aide handles matters in a satisfactory manner. One could argue that the teacher can do it better and that the best talent should always be used. It is hard to make a rebuttal to this point of view except to say that there are already too many classroom matters that need expertise; it is even possible that in some cases the teacher aide could do it better.

The role of classroom teacher is that of the instructional leader. The role of the teacher aide is as a subordinate to the supervising teacher with duties assigned in terms of her ability, experience, and proficiency. Under team effort, the supervising teacher and teacher aide can decide which duties each may assume independently or manage in common. Where there are questions of procedure, mutual discussion should finally end in decisions made by the teacher, who like the captain of a ship must ultimately command. Although a teacher aide, in a sense, is not a professional, she does take on many professional classroom responsibilities in her work load. Hence, as first officer to the captain, she should be treated professionally and with respect as a fellow worker and not as a supernumary, outsider, or servant. It must also be said that having a teacher aide mandates teacher leadership; in reverse, lack of teacher leadership precludes teacher-aide assistance; if a teacher cannot lead and is not ready to delegate she should not be associated with an aide.

We agree in large measure with the comment made by one supervising teacher that classroom duties should be mutually decided by teacher and aide upon the basic definition of "doing those things which are comfortable to each person." We suspect that the teacher and teacher aide in this instance are two individuals working closely together and with respect for each other's strengths and interests. They probably fairly divide the classroom routines and duties both interesting or dull, inspiring or obnoxious. We also feel that in this particular classroom the teacher and aide are working together toward common objectives in a climate of high morale, and that the teacher, while giving up some of her traditional prerogatives, has not forgotten her primary responsibility as classroom leader, lending inherent rather than extrinsic control.

Do teacher aides need training?

The evidence of the data indicates that there is little training of a formal nature offered teacher aides in the

schools cooperating in this study.

In a few schools, special training is required before employment, but most schools do not stipulate such training and depend on informal in-service methods, where the principals and supervising teachers help the aides adapt to their situations. This informal training appears to work satisfactorily, since most of the aides state that they learned their positions in a short time and their supervisors seem well satisfied with their accomplishments. There is much to be said for this procedure, for each aide must become accustomed to the unique characteristics of her supervisors, pupils, and classroom environment and operation.

On the other hand, something is missing when this becomes the sole training procedure. Under these circumstances, teacher aides probably do not obtain a broad understanding of their roles in the larger setting nor a knowledge of school organization and management. In addition, their jobs may involve activities that demand substantial study and expertise. This knowledge may require some forms of further training. Since this is a matter of conjecture, we suggest that each school district study its teacher-aide training program; the findings may indicate need for change and additions.

What is the future for teacher aides?

Since it is difficult in the present state of rapidly changing educational concepts, organization, and process to predict far into the future, we are content to think in terms of the present decade.

The teacher-aide movement is gaining momentum. The number of aides is increasing. The proportion of aides to other school personnel must eventually become stabilized. This may occur in the near future, but will depend on developments in education, including team teaching, technology, instructional systems, methodology, micro-teaching, and a host of other innovations that are being tried, developed, and often adopted. Teacher aides as well as teachers must be considered in relation to these new educational designs and operations.

If the future continues to show greater support for team teaching and the partnership concept, standards will be adopted that will definitively assign the teacher aide a role in the instructional team. The future teacher aide will probably be assigned a status and position that will be consistent and rigid. She may even be graded at several levels, including the present distinctions of teacher aide and teacher assistant. Role and status clarifications will no doubt eliminate the present confusion in teacher-aide titles and definitions.

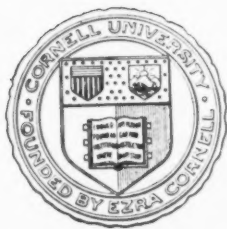
Acknowledgment

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Editor's Note: SEARCH is a new series that replaces the former Memoirs. It will be issued as SEARCH—Agriculture, and SEARCH—Human Ecology, from these sources: the College of Agriculture and its Experiment Stations at Ithaca and Geneva, New York, and the College of Human Ecology. The change results from an intensive study made by a special committee, which recommended that all existing publication series be modernized to better answer today's needs of both general and scientific audiences.

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